

W H G Kingston

"The African Trader"

Chapter One.

My father, after meeting with a severe reverse of fortune, dies, and my sisters and I are left destitute.—Our faithful old black nurse Mammy, takes care of my sisters, while I, invited by a former acquaintance, Captain Willis of the "Chieftain," sail with him on a trading voyage to the coast of Africa.

Our school was breaking up for the midsummer holidays—north, south, east, and west we sped to our different destinations, thinking with glee of the pleasures we believed to be in store for us.

I was bound for Liverpool, where my father, a West India merchant, now resided. He had for most of his life lived in Jamaica, where I was born, and from whence I had a few years before accompanied him to England to go to school.

"I am sorry we shall not see you back, Bayford," said the good doctor, as he shook me warmly by the hand. "May our heavenly Father protect you, my boy, wherever you go."

"I hope to go as a midshipman on board a man-of-war, sir," I answered. "My father expects to get me appointed to a ship this summer, and I suppose that is the reason I am leaving."

The doctor looked kindly and somewhat sadly at me. "You must not, Harry, raise your hopes on that point too high," he answered, in a grave tone. "When I last heard from your father, saying he desired to remove you, he was very unwell. I grieve to have to say this, but it is better that you should be prepared for evil tidings. God bless you Harry Bayford. The coach will soon be up; I must not detain you longer."

The doctor again warmly wrung my hand.

I hastened after Peter the porter, who was wheeling my trunk down to the village inn where the coach stopped, and I had just time to mount on the top when the guard cried out, "All right;"

the coachman laid his whip along the backs of the horses, which trotted gaily forward along the dusty road.

My spirits would naturally have risen at finding myself whirled along at the rate of ten miles an hour on my way homeward, but the last words spoken by the doctor continually recurred to me, and contributed greatly to damp them. I managed, however, at length, to persuade myself that my anticipations of evil were mere fancies. On reaching Liverpool, having called a porter to carry my things, I hurried homewards, expecting to receive the usual happy greetings from my father and sisters. My spirits sank when looking up at the windows, I saw that all the blinds were drawn down. I knocked at the door with trembling hand. A strange and rough-looking man opened it. "Is my father at home?" I asked, in a low voice. The man hesitated, looking hard at me, and then said, "Yes; but you can't see him. There are some ladies upstairs—your sisters, I suppose—you had better go to them."

There was an ominous silence in the house; no one was moving about. What had become of all the servants? I stole gently up to Jane and Mary's boudoir. They, and little Emily our younger sister, were seated together, all dressed in black. Sobs burst from them, as they threw their arms round my neck, without uttering a word. I then knew to a certainty what had happened—our kind father was dead; but I little conceived the sad misfortunes which had previously overtaken him and broken his heart, leaving his children utterly destitute.

Jane, on recovering herself, in a gentle sad voice told me all about it. "Mary and I intend going out as governesses, but we scarcely know what to do for dear Emily and you Harry, though we will devote our salaries to keep you and her at school."

"Oh, I surely can get a place as a nursemaid," said Emily, a fair delicate girl, looking but ill-adapted for the situation she proposed for herself. "And I, Jane, will certainly not deprive you and Mary of your hard-earned salaries, even were you to obtain what would be required," I answered, firmly. "I ought rather to support you, and I hope to be able to do so by some means or other."

My sisters even then were not aware of the sad position in which we were placed. Our father had been a man of peculiarly reserved and retiring manners; he had formed no friendships in England, and the few people he knew were simply business acquaintances. An execution had been put into the house even

before his death, so that we had no power over a single article it contained.

The servants, with the exception of my sisters' black nurse, had gone away, and we had not a friend whose hospitality we could claim. She, good creature (Mammy, as we called her), finding out, on seeing my trunk in the hall, that I had arrived, came breathless, from hurrying up stairs, into the room, and embracing me, kissed my forehead and cheeks as if I had still been a little child; and I felt the big drops fall from her eyes as she held me in her shrivelled arms. "Sad all this, Massa Harry, but we got good Fader up dere, and He take care of us though He call massa away," and she cast her eyes to heaven, trusting with a simple firm faith to receive from thence that protection she might have justly feared she was not likely to obtain on earth.

"We all have our sorrows, dear children," she continued, "massa had many sorrows when he lose your mother and his fortune, and I have my sorrows when I was carried away by slaver people, and leave my husband and piccaniny in Africa, and now your sorrows come. But we can pray to the good God, and he lift us out of dem all."

Mammy had often told us of the cruel way in which she had been kidnapped, and how her husband had escaped with her little boy; and after she became a Christian (and a very sincere one she was), her great grief arose from supposing that her child would be brought up as a savage heathen in ignorance of the blessed truths of the gospel. My sisters and I, as children, had often wept while she recounted her sad history, but at the time I speak of, I myself was little able to appreciate the deeper cause of her sorrow. I thought, of course, that it was very natural she should grieve for the loss of her son, but I did not understand that it arose on account of her anxiety for his soul's salvation.

"I pray day and night," I heard her once tell Jane, "dat my piccaniny learn to know Christ, and I sure God hear my prayers. How He bring it about I cannot tell."

We and Mammy followed our father to the grave, and were then compelled to quit the house, leaving everything behind us, with the exception of my sisters' wardrobes and a few ornaments, which they claimed as their property. Mammy did her best to cheer us. She had taken, unknown to my sisters, some humble, though clean, lodgings in the outskirts of the town, and to these she had carried whatever we were allowed to remove.

"See, Massa Harry," she said, showing me an old leathern purse full of gold. "We no want food for long time to come, and before then God find us friends and show us what to do."

My sisters possessed various talents, and they at once determined to employ them to the best advantage. Jane and Mary drew beautifully, and were adepts in all sorts of fancy needle-work. Emily, though young, had written one or two pretty tales, and we were sure that she was destined to be an authoress. Mammy, therefore, entreated them not to separate, assuring them that her only pleasure on earth would be to labour and assist in protecting them. Had they had no other motive, for her sake alone, they would have been anxious to follow her advice.

I was the only one of the family who felt unable to do anything for myself. I wrote too bad a hand to allow me any hopes of obtaining a situation in a counting-house; and though I would have gone out as an errand boy or page rather than be a burden to my sisters, I was sure they would not permit this, and, besides, I felt that by my taking an inferior position they would be lowered in the cold eyes of the world. I had ardently wished to go to sea, and I thought that the captain who had promised to take me as a midshipman would still receive me could I reach Portsmouth. I did not calculate the expense of an outfit, nor did I think of the allowance young gentlemen are expected to receive on board a man-of-war.

I had wandered one day down to the docks to indulge myself in the sight of the shipping, contemplating the possibility of obtaining a berth on board one of the fine vessels I saw fitting out, and had been standing for some time on the quay, when I observed a tall good-looking man, in the dress of a merchantman's captain, step out of a boat which had apparently come from a black rakish looking brigantine lying a short distance out in the stream. I looked at him hard, for suddenly it occurred to me that I remembered his features. Yes, I was certain. He had been junior mate of the "Fair Rosomond," in which vessel we had come home from Jamaica, and a great chum of mine. "Mr Willis," I said, "do you remember me? I am Harry Bayford."

"Not by looks, but by your voice and eyes I do, my boy," he answered, grasping my hand and shaking it heartily. "But what has happened? I see you are in mourning."

I told him of my father's misfortunes and death; and as we walked along frankly opened out on my views and plans. "You

will have no chance in the navy without means or friends, Harry," he answered. "There's no use thinking about the matter; but if your mind is set on going to sea I'll take you, and do my best to make a sailor of you. I have command of the 'Chieftain,' an African trader, the brigantine you see off in the stream there. Though we do not profess to take midshipmen, I'll give you a berth in my cabin, and I don't see that in the long run you will run more risk than you would have to go through on board vessels trading to other parts of the world."

"Thank you, Captain Willis, very much," I exclaimed, "I little expected so soon to go to sea."

"Don't talk of thanks, Harry," he answered, "your poor father was very kind to me, and I am glad to serve you. I had intended calling on him before sailing; and if your sisters will allow me, I'll pay them a visit, and answer any objections they may make to your going."

After dining with the captain at an inn, I hurried home with, what I considered, this good news. My sisters, however, were very unwilling to sanction my going. They had heard so much of the deadly climate of the African coast, and of dangers from slavers and pirates, that they dreaded the risk I should run. Captain Willis, according to his promise, called the next day, and not without difficulty quieted their apprehensions.

Mammy, though unwilling to part with me, still could not help feeling a deep interest in my undertaking, as she thought that I was going to visit her own still-loved country; and while assisting my sisters to prepare my outfit she entertained me with an account of its beauties and wonders, while I promised to bring her back from it all sorts of things which I expected to collect. "And suppose, Mammy, I was to fall in with your little piccaniny, shall I bring him back to you?" I asked, with the thoughtlessness of a boy—certainly not intending to hurt her feelings. She dropped her work, gazing at me with a tearful eye.

"He fine little black boy, big as you when four year old," she said, and stopped as if in thought, and then added, "Ah, Massa Harry, he no little boy now though, him great big man like him fader, you no know him, I no know him."

"But what is his name, Mammy? That would be of use," I said.

"Him called Cheebo," she answered, heaving a deep sigh. "But Africa great big country—tousands and tousands of people; you

no find Cheebo among dem; God only find him. His eye everywhere. He hears Mammy's prayers, dat great comfort."

"That it is, indeed," said Jane, fearing that my careless remarks had needlessly grieved poor Mammy, by raising long dormant feelings in her heart. "And oh, my dear Harry, if you are brought into danger, and inclined to despair—and I fear you will have many dangers to go through—recollect that those who love you at home are earnestly praying for you; and at the same time never forget to pray for yourself, and to feel assured that God will hear our united prayers, and preserve you in the way He thinks best."

"I will try to remember," I said, "but do not fancy, Jane, that I am going to run my head into all sorts of dangers. I daresay we shall have a very pleasant voyage out, and be back again in a few months with a full cargo of palm oil, ivory, gold-dust, and all sorts of precious things, such as I understand Captain Willis is going to trade for."

"You will not forget Cheebo though, Massa Harry," said Mammy, in a low voice. The idea that I might meet her son was evidently taking strong possession of her mind.

"That I will not," I answered. "I'll ask his name of every black fellow I meet, and if I find him I'll tell him that I know his mother Mammy, and ask him to come with me to see you."

"Oh, but he not know dat name," exclaimed Mammy. "Me called Ambah in Africa; him fader called Quamino. You no forget dat."

"I hope not; but I'll put them in my pocketbook," I said, writing down the names, though I confess that I did so without any serious thoughts about the matter, but merely for the sake of pleasing old Mammy. When I told Captain Willis afterwards, he was highly amused with the notion, and said that I might just as well try to find a needle in a bundle of hay as to look for the old woman's son on the coast of Africa.

The day of parting from my poor sisters and our noble-hearted nurse arrived. I did not expect to feel it so much as I did, and I could then understand how much grief it caused them.

"Cheer up, Harry," said Captain Willis, as the "Chieftain," under all sail, was standing down the Mersey. "You must not let thoughts of home get the better of you. We shall soon be in blue water, and you must turn to and learn to be a sailor. By the time you have made another voyage or so I expect to have

you as one of my mates, and, perhaps, before you are many years older, you will become the commander of a fine craft like this."

I followed the captain's advice, and by the time we had crossed the line I could take my trick at the helm, and was as active aloft as many of the elder seamen on board.

Chapter Two.

The "Chieftain" arrives off the coast of Africa, and we carry on a brisk trade with the natives, who come off to us through the surf.—At length Captain Willis proposes to run up the river Bonny to complete our cargo. Not forgetful of my promise to Mammy, I make inquiries for her son Cheebo.

It was my morning watch. I was indulging in the pleasure particularly enjoyable after sweltering in the close hot atmosphere of the cabin, of paddling about with bare feet on the wet deck, over which I and some of the men were heaving buckets of water, while others were lustily using holy-stones and scrubbing brushes, under the superintendence of Mr Wesbey, the first mate. The black cook was lighting his fire in the caboose, from whence a wreath of smoke ascended almost perpendicularly in the clear atmosphere. The sea was smooth as glass, but every now and then a slowly heaving swell lifted the vessel, and caused her sails, which hung down against the masts, to give a loud flap, while here and there the surface was broken by the fin or snout of some monster of the deep swimming round us. Our monkey, Quako, who had been turned out of his usual resting-place, was exhibiting more than his ordinary agility—springing about the rigging, and chattering loudly, now making his way aloft, whence he looked eastwards, and now returning to the caboose, as if to communicate his ideas to his sable friend.

"What makes Quako so frisky this morning?" I asked of Dick Radforth, the boatswain, a sturdy broad shouldered man of iron frame, who, with trousers tucked up, and bare arms brawny as those of Hercules, was standing, bucket in hand, near me, deluging the deck with water.

"He smells his native land, Harry," he answered, "and thinks he is going to pay a visit to his kith and kindred. We shall have to

keep him moored pretty fast, or he will be off into the woods to find them. I have a notion you will get a sight of it before long, when the sea breeze sets in and sends the old bark through the water."

"What! the coast of Africa!" I exclaimed, and thoughts of that wonderful region, with its unexplored rivers, its gloomy forests, and its black skinned inhabitants, with their barbarous customs and superstitious rites, rose in my mind.

"Aye, sure and it will be a pleasant day when we take our departure from the land, and see the last of it," observed Dick. "If those niggers would trade like other people we might make quick work of it, and be away home again in a few weeks, but we may thank our stars if we get a full cargo by this time next year, without leaving some of our number behind."

"What? I should not fancy that any of our fellows were likely to desert," I observed.

"No; but they are likely to get pressed by a chap who won't let go his gripe of them again," answered Dick.

"Who is that?" I asked.

"Yellow-fingered Jack we call him sometimes, the coast fever," said Dick. "If they would but take better care of themselves and not drink those poisonous spirits and sleep on shore at night, they might keep out of his clutches. I give this as a hint to you, Harry. I have been there a score of times, and am pretty well seasoned, but I have felt his gripe, though I do not fear him now." I thanked the boatswain for his advice. It was given, I suspected, for others' benefit as well as mine.

As the bright hot red sun rose in the sky, casting his beams down on our heads, and making the pitch bubble up from the seams in the deck—as it had done not unfrequently during the voyage—a few cats' paws were seen playing over the mirror-like deep. The sails bulged out occasionally, again to hang down as before; then once more they swelled out with the gentle breeze, and the brigantine glided through the water, gradually increasing her speed. I was eagerly looking out for the coast; at length it came in sight—its distant outline rendered indistinct by the misty pall which hung over it. As we drew nearer, its forest covered heights had a particularly gloomy and sombre appearance, which made me think of the cruelties I had heard were practised on those shores, of the barbarous slave trade, of the fearful idolatries of its dark-skinned children, of its wild

beasts, and of its deadly fevers. There was nothing exhilarating, nothing to give promise of pleasure or amusement. As our gallant brigantine glided gaily on, sending the sparkling foam from her bows through the tiny wavelets of the ocean, which glittered in the radiance of a blue and cloudless sky, and her sails filled with the fresh sea breeze, these feelings rapidly wore off. Now, on either side, appeared a fleet of fishing canoes, the wild songs of their naked crews coming across the water, as with rugged sails of matting lolling at their ease, they steered towards the shore. We overtook some of them, and such a loud jabber as they set up, talking to each other, or hailing us, I had never heard.

Being near enough to the dangerous coast, we hove-to, and watched them as they fearlessly made their way to shore on the summits of a succession of rollers which burst in fearful breakers on the beach. With our glasses we could see hundreds of dingy figures like black ants, hurrying down to meet them, and to assist in hauling up their canoes. As I cast my eye along the coast I could see many a bay and headland bordered with a rim of glittering white sand, fringed by an unbroken line of sparkling surf. Now we could make out the mud walls and thatched roofs of the native villages, scattered here and there along the shore, mostly nestling amid groves of graceful coconut trees, while further inland appeared, at distant intervals, that giant monarch of the tropical forest, the silk cotton tree, stretching its mighty limbs upwards towards the sky, and far and wide around. Such was my first view of the African coast.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Captain Willis.

"It looks better than I expected," I said. "But I don't see how we are ever to reach it, much less carry on any trade with the people. How can we possibly send any goods on shore?"

"You will see presently," he answered. "We have hoisted our trading signal, and before long we shall have plenty of dealers along side unless some other vessel has been before us; if so, we may have to wait some days till the black merchants can bring more goods down from the interior. The people about here are imbued with the very spirit of commerce. They understand too how to make a sharp bargain. We have to be wide awake, or, naked savages as they are, they will contrive to outwit us."

Our various assortments of cotton and other goods had been got up from the hold ready for the expected trade. The captain had also taken out from his strong box a supply of sovereigns

and Spanish dollars, should coin be demanded, though he relied chiefly on the more advantageous proceeding of barter.

After standing off and on the coast for some hours, we perceived several large canoes about to be launched. On either side of each canoe stood a dozen or fifteen men, holding to the gunwale with one hand, and carrying a paddle in the other. At a signal from their head man the canoe was hurried into the foaming surf; but, instead of getting in, they swam by her side, guiding her course, until the first heavy swell was past, then they threw themselves simultaneously into her, and began to paddle with might and main till they got beyond the outer swell, and on they came, shouting with satisfaction at the success of their enterprise. Two got off without accident; but three others, when in the very midst of the breakers, were swamped, and I thought that their crews, and, at all events, their cargoes, would be lost. But no such thing. As I watched them through the glass I saw that they were all holding on to the gunwale, shoving her from side to side, until the water was thrown out, when in they got again, and began to gather up numerous articles floating around them. This accomplished, off they came as if nothing had happened. As they got alongside I discovered the reason why their effects did not sink—some were casks of palm oil, which naturally floated, while the elephants' tusks and other pieces of ivory, were fastened to large floats of cork-wood, and several of the men had small light wooden boxes, which contained gold-dust, secured to their waists. Though these were of a weight sufficient greatly to incumber, if not to sink, an ordinary swimmer, so expert were, they in the water that they appeared in no way to be inconvenienced. Several of them recognised Captain Willis, who had frequently before been off the coast, and having been fairly dealt with by him, and aware that he knew the price they would be ready to take, gave him very little trouble. Some, however, tried to outwit him, but he was very firm with them, and let them understand that he was indifferent to trading except on equitable terms. Altogether he was well satisfied with the result of his first day's business.

We stood off the coast before the sea breeze died away, and returned again on the following morning. This sort of work we continued for several days. It was, however, a very tedious mode of proceeding. At length we found that the amount of produce, brought off from day to day, rapidly diminishing, while the natives began to demand higher prices than at first. We accordingly stood down the coast towards another native town, with the inhabitants of which we began to trade in the same way as before.

From the time we first came into these latitudes we kept a bright look-out night and day. I asked old Radforth what was the use of doing this when we were engaged in a lawful commerce, which must of necessity prove an advantage to the negroes. "Why, you see, Harry, there are other gentry visit this coast with a very different object in view," he answered. "For the Spaniards and Portuguese, especially, come here to carry off the unfortunate inhabitants as slaves, and sometimes the villainous crews of their craft, if in want of provisions and water, will help themselves, without ceremony, from any merchantman they may fall in with. And should she have a rich cargo on board, they have been known, I have heard say, to make her people walk the plank, and sink or burn her, so that no one may know anything about the matter. Now our skipper has no fancy to be caught in that fashion, and if we were to sight a suspicious looking sail, as the 'Chieftain' has got a fast pair of heels of her own, we should do our best to keep out of her way. You see when once fellows take to slaving they go from bad to worse. I have known something of the trade in my time, and it made my heart turn sick to see the way in which they crowd hundreds of their fellow-creatures down on the slave decks of their vessels, packed as close together as herrings in a cask, for their run across the Atlantic to the Brazils or Cuba. It may be, before we leave this coast, you will have the opportunity of seeing for yourself, so I need not tell you more about it now."

After this I was as vigilant as anyone on board in looking out for suspicious craft,—for I had no fancy to be caught by a piratical slaver, and be made to walk the plank, and have our gallant little "Chieftain" sent to the bottom.

We continued cruising along the coast for some weeks, slowly exchanging our cargo for African products.

At length Captain Willis got tired of this style of doing business. "I am going to run up the river Bonny, Harry, where we are certain in time to get a full cargo of palm oil, though I would rather have filled up without going into harbour at all, for the climate, I own, is not the healthiest possible, and we may chance to have a touch of sickness on board."

He spoke, however, in so unconcerned a way that I had no serious apprehensions on that score.

I had not forgotten my promise to Mammy, and had asked all the blacks I could manage to speak to if they could tell me anything of Cheebo. I need scarcely say that my question was received with a broad grin by most of them. "Plenty Cheebos,"

was the general reply. "Dat black fellow Cheebo; and dat, and dat, and dat Quamino," was added, when I said that such was the name of the father of the Cheebo of whom I was in search, but none of them answered the description of poor Mammy's son. At length I felt very much inclined to give up my inquiries as hopeless.

Chapter Three.

We enter a river.—Its scenery described.—Receive a visit from the King, and trade with the natives.—The products of Africa, for which we trade, mentioned, and the curious mode in which trade is conducted.—Fever breaks out on board, and several of the crew die.—Sad end of poor Bob.—The boatswain and mates attacked with fever.—More deaths.—The Captain's unwillingness, notwithstanding this, to leave the river till his cargo is completed.

Standing in towards the coast with the sea breeze we saw before us an opening between two low mangrove covered points, which formed the mouth of the river we were about to ascend. The scarcely ever ceasing rollers, coming across the wide Atlantic, broke on the bar which ran across its entrance with somewhat less violence than on the coast itself. Still there was an ugly looking line of white foam which had to be crossed before we could gain the smooth water within. We hove-to, making the signal for a pilot. A canoe in a short time came off, having on board a burly negro, dressed in a broad brimmed hat, nankeen trousers, and white jacket, with a sash round his waist. He produced several documents to show that he was capable of taking a vessel over the bar.

"Wait bit captain," he said, "high water soon, and den ship go in smooth—batten down hatches though, case sea break aboard."

Captain Willis followed this advice; it was well that he did so. "Up helm now captain—bar berry good—plenty breeze." We stood on with all canvas set; the hands at their stations ready to shorten sail when necessary. Soon we found ourselves mounting to the top of a high roller, then on we glided, till in another instant down we came amid the hissing roaring breakers, their foam-topped summits dancing up on either side, and deluging our decks. I saw our black pilot holding on pretty tightly by the main shrouds—I followed his example, for I

expected every moment to feel the vessel's keel touching the bar, when I knew that if she were to hang there even for the shortest possible time, the following sea might break over her stem, and make a clean sweep of her deck. On she sped though, lifted by another huge roller; downwards we then glided amid the eddying creamy waters on to the calm surface of the river, up which the next minute we were gliding rapidly.

The appearance of the banks on either side was not attractive. As far as the eye could reach was one dense jungle of mangrove bushes, and though we ran on for several miles it in no way improved. The wind died away as we advanced, and the atmosphere became hot and oppressive. I had expected to see pleasant openings, with neat cottages, plantations of maize, rice, and other grain, pepper, palms and palmetos; but instead, a uniform line of the sombre tinted mangrove alone presented itself, the trees just too high to prevent our having a view over them of any more attractive scenery which might have existed beyond.

I asked our black pilot when we should come to the town. "By den you see," he answered with a look which denoted that we should in time witness something worth beholding.

The water was as smooth as glass. Here and there coveys of birds might be seen skimming along the surface, while overhead a flight of scarlet winged flamingos swept in wide circles, their plumage flashing in the sun as they prepared to descend on one of the many sandbanks in the stream, to carry on their fishing operations. As we advanced, now and then a canoe would shoot out from among the jungle; the black skinned paddlers coming quickly alongside, to ascertain our character and the objects for which we wished to trade. Sometimes too we could see troops of monkeys making their way among the branches, their small grinning faces peering out at us as we glided by through some channel near the shore. Hour after hour thus passed by, but at length, towards evening, the belt of mangrove bushes diminished in thickness, and other trees of more attractive appearance began to take their place, and openings appeared with a few huts scattered about on the slopes of gently rising ground.

As evening was closing in we caught sight, in the far distance, of a congregation of huts, and the pilot gave the captain the welcome information, that he might shorten sail, and prepare to come to an anchor. By the time we had made everything snug darkness closed down upon us. We could just see a few lights twinkling ahead, while on either side, across the stream,

appeared the dark outline of the tall trees which clothed the river's banks. Silence reigned around us, with the exception of the ripple of the water against the vessel's bows; but from afar off came a confused mixture of sounds, which appeared like the croaking of frogs, the chirruping of crickets, and other creeping and flying things, the screeching and chattering of monkeys, mingled with the voices of human beings making merry round their huts. The air was damp and heavy and hot; at the same time I felt that I should like to be seated by a roaring drying fire.

We kept a watch on deck as if we were at sea, with arms ready for use, for though our pilot had assured us "that all good people here," Captain Willis was too well acquainted, both with the character of the natives, and the sort of gentry who might possibly be in the river waiting for a cargo of slaves, to put himself in their power.

I tumbled and tossed about during the night in my berth, unable to sleep, both on account of the heat, and, strange to say, of the perfect quiet which prevailed. Next morning a large canoe was seen coming off from the shore, in which was seated a white headed old negro in a glazed cocked hat, a red hunting coat on his shoulders, a flannel petticoat round his waist, and a pair of worsted slippers on his feet. The pilot, who had remained on board, notified to the captain, with great formality, that he was King Dingo, coming to receive his dash or payment for allowing us to trade with his people. His majesty was received with due ceremony, and conducted into the cabin, when, as soon as he was seated, notwithstanding the early hour of the day, he signified that it was his royal pleasure to be presented with a bottle of rum. Having taken two or three glasses, which seemed to have no other effect on him than sharpening his wits, he handed it to one of his attendants, and then applied himself to the breakfast, which had just been placed on the table, and I dare not say how many cups of coffee, sweetened to the brim with sugar, he swallowed in rapid succession. Having received half a dozen muskets, as many kegs of powder, brass pans, wash basins, plates, gunflints, and various cotton articles, as his accustomed dash, and requested a dozen bottles of rum in addition, he took his departure, promising to come again and do a little trade on his own account.

The subjects of the sable potentate were now allowed to come on board, and several canoes were seen approaching us from different parts of the shore. One brought a tusk of ivory, others jars of palm oil, several had baskets of India-rubber, or gum-

elastic, as it is called. Besides these articles, they had ebony, bees'-wax, tortoise-shell, gold-dust, copper-ore, ground nuts, and others to dispose of.

We soon found that the business of trading with these black merchants was not carried on at the rate we should have desired.

The trader, having hoisted his goods out of his canoe, would place them on deck, and seat himself before them, looking as unconcerned as if he had not the slightest wish to part with them. Some would wait till the captain came forward and made an offer; others would ask a price ten times the known value of the article, extolling its excellence, hinting that very little more was likely to be brought down the river for a long time to come, and that several other traders were soon expected. The captain would then walk away, advising the owner to keep it till he could obtain the price he asked. The trader would sit still till the captain again came near him, then ask a somewhat lower price. On this being refused he would perhaps make a movement as if about to return to his canoe, without having the slightest intention of so doing; and so the game would go on till the captain would offer the former price for the article, when, perhaps, the trader would sit on, time being of no consequence to him, in the hopes that he might still receive a larger amount of goods. On other occasions the captain had to commence bargaining, when he invariably offered considerably below the true mark, when the trader as invariably asked something greatly above it. The captain would then walk aft, and, perhaps, come back and talk about the other ports he intended to visit, where the natives were more reasonable in their demands. Captain Willis was too cool a hand to show any impatience, and he thus generally made very fair bargains, always being ready to give a just value for the articles he wished to purchase. As each jar of oil, each tooth or box of gold-dust, or basket of India-rubber, could alone be procured by this process, some idea may be formed of the time occupied every day in trading.

Palm oil was, however, the chief article we were in search of; but two weeks passed by, and still a considerable number of our casks remained unfilled. Fever too had broken out on board. Three of our men were down with it, and day after day others were added to the number. The two first seized died, and we took them on shore to be buried. This had a depressing effect on the rest.

When we returned on board we found that a third was nearly at his last gasp. Poor fellow, the look of despair and horror on his

countenance I can never forget. "Harry," he exclaimed, seizing my hand as I went to him with a cup of cooling drink, "I am not fit to die, can no one do any thing for me? I dare not die, can't some of those black fellows on shore try to bring me through—they ought to know how to man handle this fever."

"I am afraid that they are but bad doctors, Bob," I answered, "however, take this cooling stuff it may perhaps do you good."

"A river of it won't cool the burning within me," he gasped out. "Oh Harry, and if I die now, that burning will last for ever and ever. I would give all my wages, and ten times as much, for a few days of life. Harry, I once was taught to say my prayers, but I have not said them for long years, and curses, oaths, and foul language have come out of my lips instead. I want to have time to pray, and to recollect what I was taught as a boy." I tried to cheer him up, as I called it, but alas, I too had forgotten to say my prayers, and had been living without God in the world, and though I did not curse and swear, my heart was capable of doing that and many other things that were bad, and so I could offer the poor fellow no real consolation. I persuaded him to drink the contents of the cup; but I saw as I put it to his lips that he could with difficulty get the liquid down his throat.

"You have had a hard life of it, Bob, and perhaps God will take that into consideration," I said, making use of one of the false notions Satan suggests to the mind of seamen as well as to others. Bob knew it to be false.

"That won't undo all the bad things I have been guilty of; it won't unsay all the blasphemies and obscene words which have flowed from my lips," he gasped out.

"Then try to pray as you used to do," I said, "I will try and pray with you, but I am a bad hand at that I am afraid."

"Oh, I can't pray now, it's too late! too late!" he exclaimed in a low despairing voice, as he sank back on his pillow, turning his fast glazing eye away from me. He had been delirious for some time before then, but his senses had lately been restored. He seemed instinctively to feel that I could offer him none of the consolation he needed.

While I was still standing by the side of his bunk, one of the mates came forward to see how the sick were getting on. He spoke a few words to try and comfort the dying man. They had no more effect than mine, he only groaned out, "It's too late! too late! too late!" His voice rapidly grew weaker—there was a

slight convulsive struggle; the mate lifted his hand, it fell down by his side.

"Poor Bob has gone," he said, "there will be more following before long, I fear. If I was the captain I would get out of this river without waiting for a full cargo, or we shall not have hands enough left to take the vessel home."

This scene made a deep impression on me; too late! too late! continued sounding in my ears. What if I were to be brought to utter the same expression? Where was poor Bob now? I tried not to think of the matter, but still those fearful words "too late" would come back to me; then I tried to persuade myself that I was young and strong, and as I had led a very different sort of life to most of the men, I was more likely than any one to escape the gripe of the fever.

We had another trip on shore to bury poor Bob. The captain seemed sorry for him. "He was a man of better education than his messmates, though, to be sure, he had been a wild chap," he observed to me. Bob's conscience had been awakened; that of the others remained hardened or fast asleep, and they died as they had lived, foul, unwashed, unfit to enter a pure and holy heaven.

I am drawing a sad and painful picture, but it is a true one. I did not then understand how full of horror it was, though I thought it very sad to lose so many of our crew.

We continued to carry on trade as before, and the captain sent messengers urging the natives to hasten in bringing palm oil on board, but they showed no inclination to hurry themselves; and as to quitting the river till he had a full cargo on board, he had no intention of doing that.

Hitherto the officers had escaped; but one morning the second mate reported that the first mate was unable to leave his berth, though he believed that it was nothing particular; but Dick Radforth, who was considered to be the strongest man on board, when he had tried to get up that morning, had been unable to rise. The captain sent me forward to see him.

Some hours must have passed since he was attacked. He was fearfully changed, but still conscious.

"Black Jack has got hold of me at last, Harry, but I'll grapple with him pretty tightly before I let him get the victory, do you see," he observed, when I told him that the captain had sent

me to see him. "I'm obliged to him, but if he wishes to give me a longer spell of life, and to save the others on board, he will put to sea without loss of time, while the land breeze lasts. A few mouthfuls of sea air would set me up in a trice. If we don't get that there will be more of us down with fever before night."

The boatswain had scarcely said this when he began to rave and tumble and toss about in his berth, and I had to call two of the men to assist me in keeping him quiet. When I got back to the cabin, I told the captain what Radforth had said. "Oh, that's only the poor fellow's raving. It will never do to leave the river without our cargo, for if we do some other trader will sure to be in directly afterwards and take advantage of what has been collected for us. However, I have had notice that lots of oil will be brought on board in a few days, and when we get that, we will put to sea even though we are not quite full."

The captain shortly afterwards paid Radforth a visit; but the boatswain was raving at the time, and never again spoke while in his senses. The following day we carried him to his grave on shore. The death of one who was looked upon as the most seasoned and strongest man, had, as may be supposed, a most depressing effect among the crew. It was soon also evident that the first mate was ill with the fever, and indeed more than half our number were now down with it.

Still the captain could not bring himself to quit the river. "In a few days very possibly we shall have a full cargo Harry," he said to me. "In the meantime, I daresay, the rest will hold out. Radforth overworked himself, or he would not have caught the fever. Take care Harry you don't expose yourself to the sun, and you will keep all to rights my boy,—I am very careful about that—though I am so well seasoned that nothing is likely to hurt me."

"I wish we were out of the river, Captain Willis," I could not help replying. "The mates and the men are always talking about it, and they say the season is unusually sickly or this would not have happened."

"They must mind their own business, and stay by the ship, wherever I choose to take her," he exclaimed, in an angry tone, and I saw that I should have acted more wisely in not making the observation I had just let fall. Still, to do him justice, Captain Willis was as kind and attentive as he possibly could be to the sick men; he constantly visited the first mate, and treated him as if he had been a brother.

All this time not a word about religion was spoken on board; I had, it is true, a Bible in my chest, put there by my sisters, but I had forgotten all about it, and there was not another in the ship.

Except in the instance I have mentioned, and in one or two others, not even the sick men seemed concerned about their souls. The only consolation which those in health could offer to them, was the hope that they might recover. "Cheer up Dick," or, "cheer up Tom, you'll struggle through it, never say die—you will be right again before long old boy," and such like expressions were uttered over and over again, often to those at their last gasp, and so the poor fellows went out of the world believing that they were going to recover and enjoy once more the base pursuits and unholy pleasures in which their souls' delighted. Alas, I have often thought what a fearful waking up there must have been of those I had thus seen taking their departure from this world, yet the rest of us remained as hardened, and in most cases as fearless, of consequences as before.

The death of the first mate, which very soon occurred, made the second mate, I perceived, somewhat more anxious than before about himself. The first mate had been a strong healthy man, and had often before been out on the coast, while the second mate was always rather sickly, and this was his first visit to the shores of Africa. Whether or not his fears had an effect upon him, I cannot say, but he began to look very ill, and became every day more anxious about himself. The captain tried to arouse him, telling him that we should be at sea enjoying the fresh breeze in a few days, and that he must hold out till then. "Still it is of no use, Harry," he said to me, as I was walking the deck with him one evening, trying to get a few mouthfuls of air. "I know I shall never leave this horrible place alive unless the captain would give the order at once to trip the anchor, then perhaps the thought of being free of it would set me up again."

I told the captain when I went into the cabin what the poor mate had said, for I really thought our going away might be the means of saving his life, as well as that of others aboard. He took what I said in very good part, but was as obstinately bent in remaining as before. "Those are all fancies, Harry," he answered. "He has taken it into his head that he is to die, and that is as likely to kill him as the fever itself."

"But then he fancies that he would get well if we were at sea," I replied. "Perhaps that really would set him up again."

"Well, well, just tell him that you heard me say I hoped to get away in two or three days, perhaps that will put him to rights," answered the captain, laughing. "Now, Harry, don't let me hear any more of this sort of thing; I have bother enough with these black traders without having to listen to the fancies of my own people."

I told the mate what the captain had said. "If the vessel does get away at the time he mentioned, I hope that I may be able to help in taking her to sea, if not, mark my words Harry, there will be a good many more of us down with the fever." He spoke too truly. The traders continued to arrive but slowly, as before, with their oil. The captain waited and waited like an angler anxious to catch more fish. Before the week was over the second mate was dead, and we had only two men fit for duty on board.

Chapter Four.

**More victims to the fever.—The captain himself attacked.—
We ship some Krumen and other blacks, among whom is a
Christian, Paul Balingo.—Paul instructs the captain and me in
the truth.—Captain Willis gets somewhat better, and we
prepare for sea.**

The ship was almost full, and we had a few more empty casks, and were expecting some traders on board during the day with oil which would fill them up. When I turned out of my berth, just as morning broke, I found the captain seated in his cabin, with his head resting on his hands. He felt a little ill, he acknowledged, but said he was sure it was nothing. "We will get under weigh at daylight to-morrow morning, when the tide makes down, and I shall soon be all to rights," he observed. Still, I could not help remarking that he looked pale, and moved with difficulty. "I have agreed to ship half-a-dozen Krumen, and two or three other black seamen, who are knocking about here," he added. "This fever has made us terribly short-handed; but I hope the fellows who are sick will come round when we are in blue water again. Harry, go forward and see how they are getting on, and send Tom Raven to me." Raven was one of the two men who had hitherto escaped the fever, and being a good seaman, had been promoted to the rank of mate.

I went on deck, but saw neither him nor Grinham, the other man. I made my way forward to where the crew were berthed, under the topgallant forecastle, expecting to find them there. Grinham was in his berth; he and two other poor fellows were groaning and tossing with fever, but the rest were perfectly quiet. I thought they were asleep. What was my horror, on looking into their berths, to find that their sleep was that of death!

"Water, water," murmured Grinham. I ran and fetched some, and as I gave it to him I asked where Raven was. "I don't know," he answered, somewhat revived by the cool draught. "It's his watch on deck. He said he felt a little ill when he relieved me."

Having done what I could for the other man, I went to look for Raven. I found him in the second mate's berth. He too was ill with fever, and seemed to have forgotten that he ought to have been on deck, and that the vessel had been left without anyone to look-out. I told him that the captain had resolved to put to sea the next day. "Had he gone a week ago the lives of some of us might have been saved, but it is too late now," he answered with a groan.

Sick at heart, after attending to him, I returned to the cabin, to make my report to the captain.

"What, all! everyone of them sick!" he exclaimed, sighing deeply. "Then God have mercy upon us. You must not fall ill, Harry."

"Not if I can help it, sir," I replied.

"I must keep up," he said, and if I can get these Krumen on board we will still put to sea. They are trustworthy fellows, and, Harry, you must be my mate. You are somewhat young; but you have got a head on your shoulders. You must keep your wits alive.

"I'll do my best, sir," I answered, feeling not a little proud of the rank to which I thus was raised. I had, indeed, for some time past been performing the duties of mate, supercargo, steward, and not unfrequently helping the black cook, Sambo, and, indeed, lending a hand to everything which required to be done. Now Sambo and I were literally the only two people capable of working on board. The captain himself I feared greatly had got the fever, notwithstanding his assertions to the contrary. It was surprising that I, the youngest in the ship, and least inured to

the climate, should have escaped. I had always been very healthy; had never done anything to hurt my constitution, and had followed the captain's advice in keeping out of the sun, and was inclined to feel somewhat self-satisfied on that account—not considering that it was owing to God's mercy and loving-kindness that I had been preserved.

The captain said he would go and see Raven; but having got up, after moving a few paces, he sat down again with a groan, and a deadly pallor came over his countenance. He felt that he, too, had got the fever. I advised him to lie down again and rest, but to that he would not consent. He was determined to carry on the trade as usual during the day, and to get ready for sea as soon as the black seamen, whom he expected every hour on board, arrived. He sent me up frequently to see whether they were coming off, and now, when too late, he seemed as anxious as anyone had been to get the vessel out of the river.

I was thankful when at length I found two canoes alongside with the expected blacks. The Krumen were fine athletic fellows, neatly dressed in shirts and trousers, and having all served on board men-of-war or in merchant vessels, spoke a little English. They had been hired by the captain's agent on shore; and as their wages had been settled, and they knew the duties they were required to perform, they went to work at once under their head man, who had been appointed to act as boatswain, and seemed inclined to be orderly and obedient. Besides the Krumen there were, as I have before said, several other black seamen engaged, who had been mostly recaptured slaves, and had afterwards entered on board men-of-war or merchant vessels touching at Sierra Leone. I was struck with the manner of one of them, a fine active man, as I, now the only representative of the "Chieftain's" officers and crew, stood near the gangway to receive them. Touching his hat in a respectful manner, he asked after Captain Willis. "He know me, Paul Balingo. I sail once with him some time ago. He kind man, so I come again." I told him that the captain was rather unwell. He had charged me not to let the blacks fancy that he had the fever. I added, that I was sure he would be glad to see him in the cabin.

"I go when you tell I come on board," answered Paul. "Sorry to hear him ill."

"Oh, he says its nothing," I observed, "and as soon as the tide serves we are to go down the river, and put to sea."

I made this remark in obedience to the captain's instructions. I now gave directions to the black boatswain to get the cargo stowed without delay.

The captain was much pleased to hear that Paul Balingo had joined the vessel, and said he would see him at once. "I remember him well," he observed, "a good steady fellow."

I told Paul to come down, and he received a friendly welcome. I then reminded the captain that there was another duty to be performed. It was to bury the men who had died during the night. This was beyond the strength of those who still survived.

"I see to it, sir," said Paul.

"The sooner the better then," observed the captain. "And when you return we will trip the anchor, if there is wind enough to help us along."

Four bodies were lowered into the canoe, and Paul and some of his companions took them on shore. He had fastened them up in canvas, for there was no time to make coffins; indeed, the carpenter was among them. I should like to have accompanied him to pay the last mark of respect I could to the poor fellows, but there were too many duties to be performed on board to allow of this. I watched them, however, through the glass as they stood on the beach, which formed our burial place. To my surprise, after the graves were dug, I observed Paul Balingo take off his hat—his companions imitating his example—when he seemed to be lifting up his hands in prayer. Then he addressed a number of natives who were standing round, and the bodies were carefully lowered into the graves, and covered up.

When he returned on board I told him that the captain was very much obliged to him for what he had done. "And I saw too," I observed, "that you were praying for the poor fellows."

"No, massa; I no pray for dem," he answered. "If when dey died dey loved Jesus Christ, den dey no want my prayers; if dey no love Him, den He no love dem. No, massa, me pray for dose that stand round, and for dose still alive. I pray dat God's Holy Spirit would come into dere hearts, and told dem to love Jesus, and dat He died for sinners. I prayed dat dey would hear His Word, and love Him and serve Him. Den I tell dem that Jesus Christ came down on earth, and become man, and be obedient to God, and do all dat good child should do who lub him parents, and dat He pure and holy like lamb widout spot or

blemish, and dat He died on de cross, and be punished instead of wicked man, and dat God den say dat one who not deserve punishment being punished He will forgive all dose His dear Son present to Him, who lub Him and serve Him. Den I tell dem dat Jesus Christ died for dem, and dat if dey trust to Him He put away all dere sins, and God not look at dere sins any more. Den I turn de matter about, and I say dat you and all men are poor and naked and covered with dirt and sores, and not fit to go into de presence of pure and holy God; but if you love Christ and trust dat He died and was punished instead of you, den He put on you a white robe, cover you wid His righteousness, and den when you go to God He longer see that you are poor and naked, but He only see the white robe, and He say, 'Now you may come into dis pure and bright heaven, and live wid Me.' Then once more I say again, look here, God put you into this world, and you owe God everything. You ought to obey Him and serve Him, and give Him all your strength and health, and to try and please Him in all things every moment of your life. Next I remind dem dat none of us do it, so we owe God a debt, and the longer we live the greater is the debt. It is not den all the things that we do dat God reckon, but the many things that we ought to do and which we leave undone. We receive all the good things from God, and we give Him nothing in return. Then we have no means to pay this debt, so Jesus Christ, because He love us, say He pay it, and God say He accept His payment and set us free. Den I say to the people, Do you believe dis? If you do, and try to love God, and serve God, and do what Jesus Christ did when He was on earth, den you have living faith, and you are free, and God no say longer that you owe Him debt, but He call you His dear children, and when you leave this world He receive you in heaven."

"Why, Paul," I exclaimed, after listening with astonishment to what he had said, "I little expected to hear such things come out of a—" (I was going to say negro's mouth, but changed it to) "African sailor's mouth. You ought to be a missionary."

"Every Christian man ought to be a missionary," he answered. "If he love the Lord Jesus, and know that the Lord Jesus love him, then he ought to tell that love to others, and if he knows the value of his own soul then he values the souls of others, and try to win those souls for Christ. The truth is, massa, I do want to be missionary, and I seek to go to England to learn more. I there learn to preach the gospel, and when I come back I carry the glad tidings of salvation to my ignorant countrymen."

I was very much struck with Paul's earnestness and zeal, though at that time I could scarcely comprehend all he said—I myself knew nothing experimentally of the great love of Jesus of which he spoke. The poor black Christian was far more enlightened than I was. Still I felt a satisfaction at having him on board. He at once showed that he was not a mere theoretical Christian, for as soon as his duty on board the ship was over, he devoted himself to attending on the sick men. All the hours he could snatch from sleep he spent by the side of their bunks, urging them to trust to Jesus, and to repent of their sins while yet there was time.

The poor second mate grew worse and worse. Paul visited him, and he heard from the lips of the black seaman, perhaps for the first time, the full and free message of salvation; and, I believe, from what Paul told me, and from the remarks the mate made to me before he died, that he had fully accepted God's gracious offer of reconciliation.

I am going ahead though too fast in my narrative. Before the morning came that we were to have left our anchorage Captain Willis himself was laid prostrate with the fever, and having now no one on board to navigate the vessel, we could not venture to sea. I would have done my best to find our way to Sierra Leone, but the black boatswain refused to leave the harbour without an officer capable of taking charge of the brigantine. We were compelled, therefore, to wait till Captain Willis should recover sufficiently, or till the arrival of another English vessel which could spare one of her mates to take charge of the "Chieftain."

Before many days were over Captain Willis, and Sambo, the black cook, and I, were the only persons of those who had come into the river, still alive on board. Had the Krumen been badly disposed, they might, without difficulty, have taken possession of the vessel, and made off with her rich cargo; but they appeared, as far I could judge, to intend to act faithfully, and perform their various duties as well as if the captain's eye had been constantly upon them. About Paul I had no doubt. Little as I knew of vital religion myself, I was sure that he was a true man, and that he acted according to his professions. Nothing could exceed his attention to the captain; he or I were constantly at his bedside; and Paul showed considerable skill in treating the disease. I believe that it was mainly owing to him, through God's mercy, that the captain did not succumb to it, as the rest of the crew had done.

"Paul," said the captain one morning, when he felt himself getting a little better, "I owe you my life, I will try not to forget you."

"Oh, no, no captain, poor fellow like me not able to do you good; give God de praise," he answered solemnly, looking upwards. "Oh, if you did but know how God loves you, how He takes care of you, and gives you all the good things of life, and saves you from danger, and wishes you to come and live with Him, and be happy for ever and ever, you would try to love Him and serve Him, and obey Him in all things."

"I don't think that God can care for one who has cared so little for Him," answered the captain. "I don't mean to say that I call myself a bad man, or that I have many great sins on my conscience, and so, I suppose, if I died He would hot shut me out of heaven altogether."

"Captain," said Paul, fixing his eyes steadily on him, "the debil told you dat; he a liar from the beginning. God says, 'There is none that doeth good, no not one,' 'The soul that sinneth shall surely die.' What does dat mean? Not, surely, that if you sinner He let you get into heaven. I ask you, captain, whether you are a sinner, or whether you pure and holy, and trust to Christ, and love Christ, and fit to go and live for ever and ever in the pure and holy heaven with Him? Understand, I do not ask whether you are a great sinner in your own sight, but whether you have ever committed any sins; and remember, God says, 'the soul that sinneth,' not only the soul that is a great sinner."

The captain looked much annoyed. "Yes, of course, I have committed some sins; but I don't see why God has any right to charge them against me."

"God made this world, and all things that are therein. God rules this world, and God made His laws, and He says they are just and right, and God says, 'The soul that sinneth shall surely die,'" answered Paul, solemnly. "Captain understand, it is not I who say that. God says it. But though God is a God of justice He is full of love and mercy, and He has therefore formed a plan for the benefit of sinning men, by which man's sins can be washed away, by which His justice will be satisfied, His love and mercy shown. He has allowed another to be punished instead of the sinner," Paul continued, explaining to the captain God's plan of salvation much in the same terms as he had already explained it to me.

"I never understood that matter before," said the captain. "But still I do not see how God can expect us to be as good as you say."

"Massa Captain, I do not say dat God expect us to be good; but still He has a right to demand that we should be good. He made man pure and holy and upright, and He gave him free will to act as he chose; but man disobeyed God and went away from Him, and forgot Him, and so God has the right to punish man. But den God is full of love and mercy, and He does not want to punish him, but wants him to come back to Him, and so He has sent His message to man to tell him how he may do that. Now as man cannot be good and pure and holy and do nothing but good, but, on the contrary, does much harm, he must either accept God's plan of salvation, or be punished. You have heard, captain, about the thief on the cross, even when he was dying he put faith in Jesus, and Jesus told him that he should be that night with Him in paradise. So you see, captain, there is hope for the sinner, even at the last, and this shows that God does not expect us to do anything good in order to be saved, but only just to put faith in the sacrifice of His dear Son—that is to say, to believe that He was punished instead of us. But then remember, captain, that only one thief was saved; and that shows to us that we must not put off turning to Jesus to the last, and, therefore, I pray you, captain, go to Him at once; trust to Him now, and you will not feel unhappy; and if this fever takes you away, as it has taken away so many people on board this ship, you will hab no fear of death, for you will go to live with Jesus, and be happy with Him for ever and ever."

Captain Willis groaned. "I'll pray wid you, captain," said Paul, and he knelt down by the side of the bed, and lifted up his voice in prayer, and earnestly besought God to send His Holy Spirit to soften the captain's heart, and to enlighten his mind.

I had listened attentively to all that Paul had said, and I prayed that the blessing which he asked for the captain might descend on me also; for I had begun to discover that my heart was very hard, and prone to evil, and that I had no love for Jesus, no desire to obey His law. Thus the truths of the gospel, as they fell from the lips of the black sailor, first came home to my heart.

Several days passed by—the "Chieftain" was got ready for sea, and the captain considered himself well enough to take the command.

Chapter Five.

We at length get out of the river into the open sea, but a calm comes on, and the Captain again becomes very ill.—No one on board understanding navigation, I doubt whether I shall find my way to Sierra Leone.—The Captain does not believe that he is in danger.—Paul pleads with him about the safety of his soul.—A fire breaks out in the hold.—We in vain endeavour to extinguish it.—The rest of the crew desert us.—Paul and I endeavour to save the Captain, but driven from the cabin by the flames leap overboard and reach a small boat, which we right and get into.—See a schooner approaching us.

At day-break the pilot came on board, the sails were loosed, the anchor hove-up, and the "Chieftain," with a hot land breeze, which still blew strong, glided down the river. Captain Willis, who had been brought from his cabin by Paul and Sambo, sat propped up with pillows on the deck. It was melancholy to see him, his once strong frame reduced to a mere skeleton, his countenance pale and haggard, and his strong voice now sounding weak and hollow, and scarcely to be heard by those to whom he issued his orders. I stood by him to repeat them. I saw him cast an eye towards the spot which contained the graves of our shipmates, and I could divine his thoughts. Perhaps he might have reflected that had he not been so greedy of gain, many of them might be still alive, while he himself might be enjoying health and strength.

The mangrove covered shores looked even more sombre and monotonous than before, in the grey light of morning, as we glided down between them. The air was hot and oppressive, and full of pestilence, and it seemed a wonder to me that I should have lived so many weeks while breathing such an atmosphere. I dreaded lest the breeze should fail us, and we should be compelled to spend another night under its influence; but the wind held, the tide was in our favour, and we had nearly reached the mouth of the river before the wind dropped, and we had to bring up. A few minutes afterwards the fresh sea breeze came rushing in, pure and sweet, and comparatively cool. With what delight did I gulp it down. I quickly felt like another creature. The captain also seemed to revive rapidly under its influence, and I began to hope that he would ultimately recover.

I eagerly watched the sparkling lines of white foam as the ocean waves, meeting the ebbing current of the river, broke across the bar. How I longed for the evening, when the land breeze would again fill our sails, and carry us out into the open bounding ocean. It seemed to me that then all difficulty would be passed, and we should only have to shape our course for England, and steer on till we should reach it.

The captain, unwilling again to go below, sat all day on deck under an awning, ready for the moment when we might venture to weigh anchor. It came at last. Just before sunset the hot wind began to blow. Although the bar still wore a threatening aspect, the pilot declared that, without fear, we might venture over it.

Not a moment was lost, on we stood towards it. In a short time foaming breakers were hissing and bubbling around us. Once more I felt the vessel rising to the heaving wave, and welcomed the showers of spray which flew over her deck. On she sped, but very slowly; now she sank downwards, and it seemed as if the next roller would send her back on the bar. It glided under her, however, and then she appeared floating, as it were, almost at rest on its summit, and then downwards she slid, slowly making her onward way.

In a few minutes more we were in the free open ocean, and the dark sombre river, with its gloomy associations, was far astern. Every inch of canvas the vessel could carry was set, that we might get a good offing before nightfall, when a calm was to be expected.

"I never wish to see that place again," I could not help exclaiming.

"Don't say that, Harry," answered the captain. "We may hope to have better luck the next time. If you ever want to grow rich you must run some risk. We have had an unusually sickly season, which may not again occur; and if the owners ask me to go back, I am not the man to refuse to do so, and I should look to you to go along with me."

Can it be possible, I thought, that a man, after running so fearful a risk, would willingly again expose himself to the same danger, merely for the sake of rapidly gaining wealth? I forgot at the moment that people not only hazard their health but their souls, for that object. Had I remembered the fact, I should not have been surprised at what the captain had said.

We had got out of sight of land, but the wind was very light, and we made little progress. In a short time it fell calm altogether, and the vessel lay like a log on the water. The heat, too, was very great, and the captain appeared to suffer from it. It was evident, indeed, that he was falling rapidly back, and he had now no strength to come on deck. I was much alarmed on his account, for I thought it too likely that, after apparently being so near recovery, he would die. I was anxious also on our own account, for knowing so little as I did about navigation, I could not tell how I should take the vessel into port. I got out a chart and studied it, and marked the spot where I believed we then were. I then drew a line from it to Sierra Leone, the place for which I intended to steer. It lay about north-west of us, and I hoped that if I could sight the land to the southward I might coast along till I came to it. There were, however, I knew, strong currents running, which might take us out of our course, and we might have contrary winds, which would further increase the difficulty. I thought that very likely some of the blacks knew more about the matter than I did, but I did not like to confess my apprehensions to them lest they might be tempted to play some trick, and perhaps run away with the vessel altogether.

The only person in whom I could confide was Paul. I knew that I could trust him thoroughly, but then I suspected that he was not a better navigator than I was, as he had only served on board a man-of-war and merchantmen, when he would not have been able to learn anything about the matter.

The captain caught sight of me through the open door of his berth, as I was poring over the chart spread out on the table of the main cabin. "What are you about, Harry?" he asked.

I told him that I was looking at the chart to see what course we ought to steer.

"Don't trouble yourself about that, lad," he answered; "I shall be well as soon as the breeze comes. It's this hot calm keeps me down. If the wind had continued, I should have been myself again by this time, though I have had a narrow squeak for it I'll allow."

His face looked so pale and haggard, his eyes so sunken, his voice so weak and trembling, that I could not help fearing that he was mistaken. I was unwilling to alarm him, but it was so important that I should know how to act in case of his death, that I could not help saying,—“But suppose anything was to happen to you, sir, what should you advise me to do?”

"I do not intend that anything shall happen to me, Harry," he answered, evidently annoyed at my remark. "After having got this valuable cargo on board we must not think of such a thing. Why Harry, in all my voyages I have never collected half so rich a freight."

"I earnestly hope that you may recover your health, sir," I said. "I mentioned the subject simply in case of accidents, and I did not suppose that you would be offended."

"Of course I am not, Harry," he replied. "You don't suppose that I am a coward and afraid to die; and if it was not for the sake of the vessel and her freight, I should not care, I fancy, so much about the matter; but it would never do now to knock under—so don't, Harry, put those gloomy thoughts again into my head."

On going on deck I told Paul my fears about the captain. "Yes, he very bad," he said; "but I more sorry about him soul. He think more of the cargo, which may go to the bottom in one moment, than of his soul, which live for ever and ever. O Massa Harry, we must speak again to him about dat. We will plead with him with tears in our eyes, that he think about his soul, and we will tell him not to trouble about the vessel."

Without loss of time we went to the captain. At first he listened somewhat coldly to what Paul said, but he did not grow angry. "I thank you for interesting yourself about me," he said at last. "You may be right, and if you will pray with me I will try to join you."

Paul and I thereon knelt down, as we had done before, and Paul, in very plain language, earnestly besought God to send His Holy Spirit to soften the captain's heart, to show him that he was a lost sinner, and had need of a Saviour—to enlighten his mind, and to enable him to take hold of Christ as the only way whereby he could be saved.

The captain remained for a long time afterwards silent. At length he put out his hand and grasped Paul's. "I see it now," he said, sighing deeply. "I have been, and still am, a great sinner. Oh, that I knew better how I could be saved."

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," said Paul, in a firm voice. "That is God's loving message. He sends no other; and, captain, if all the ministers of your country were to come to you, they could bring you no other. If you do believe on Jesus, and are to die this very day, He says to you just what

He said when hanging on the cross on Calvary to the dying thief, 'This night thou shalt be with me in paradise.'"

The captain was greatly moved, and I heard him, between his sobs, exclaiming, "Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief."

Oh how necessary is that prayer! and I am sure it is one which is always answered, when the sinner is truly desirous of turning from his sins, and is seeking, by every means in his power, to strengthen his belief.

I had got out my Bible several days before, and I now read it constantly to the captain, as well as to myself. Whenever I came to a passage which seemed to meet his case, he desired me to read it over and over again. Notwithstanding this, the desire was strong within him to recover, for the sake of carrying home the vessel and her rich freight in safety. That was but natural, and I earnestly hoped that he might be restored to health. Instead, however, of gaining strength, he appeared to grow weaker and weaker.

The calm had now continued for several days. Often as I looked over the side I saw dark triangular fins just rising above the surface, and moving here and there round the ship, and frequently the whole form of the monster could be discerned as it glided by; and when I saw its keen cruel eyes glancing up towards me, I felt a shudder pass through my frame, such as, according to the vulgar notion, a person feels when it is said that some one is walking over his grave. Occasionally, when anything was thrown overboard, a white flash was seen rising out of the deep, and a large pair of jaws, armed with sharp teeth, opening, gulped it down, and directly afterwards the creature went swimming on, watching for any other dainty morsel which might come in its way. "How dreadful it would be to fall overboard," I thought. "Calm as the sea is, a person, with those creatures around, would have very little chance of escaping with life."

Dark clouds had been gathering around, and the wavelets began to play over the hitherto calm ocean. Although as yet there was not much wind, the sails were trimmed, and, by the captain's orders, the vessel was put on a north-west course. I concluded, consequently, that he at all events intended touching at Sierra Leone, to obtain a mate and some white hands. The wind, however, rapidly increased, sail was taken in, and before long it was blowing a perfect hurricane. This made the poor captain more anxious than ever to get on deck, but when he attempted to move he found that he had not strength even to

sit up. The wind howled and whistled, the vessel tumbled fearfully about, and the seas, which rose up in foaming masses, frequently broke on board, deluging her deck.

I had gone down to the captain, who had directed me to visit him every quarter of an hour to let him know how things were going on, when, as I entered the cabin, I discovered a strong smell of burning, and directly afterwards I saw thin wreaths of black smoke making their way through the forward bulk-head. The dreadful conviction came upon me that the vessel was on fire. I sprang on deck, and calling the boatswain and Paul, I told them my fears. That they were too well founded we had soon fearful evidence, for the smoke, now in thick volumes, rose above the deck, both fore and aft. Still there might be time to extinguish the fire. To do this it was necessary to take off the main-hatchway, and, in spite of the risk of a sea beating over us, it was done. The instant it was off dense masses of black smoke rose up from below, preventing all attempts which the boatswain and some of his men made to discover the seat of the fire.

"We must take to the boats," he exclaimed, "the ship soon all in flames, then the boats burn and we no get away."

Paul and I as well as Sambo tried to persuade him and his Krumen to make more efforts to put out the fire before they lowered the boats. With the sea then running, indeed there was every probability that they would be swamped. We set them the example, by rigging the pumps, and filling buckets from alongside to heave down the hold. Thus encouraged, they laboured for a short time, but finding their efforts of no effect, they abandoned the work and began to lower the boats.

The wind had happily by this time somewhat moderated; while most of the people were engaged in launching the long boat, Paul and I with two other men set to work to lower one of the smaller boats. We had not forgotten the poor captain, and as the smoke had not yet made its way into his cabin, I did not intend to let him know what had occurred till the last, when I hoped, with the assistance of Paul and others, to get him lowered safely into one of the boats.

All hands were working away with frantic haste, for we could not tell at what moment the flames might burst forth, and render the deck untenable. At length the long boat was launched, and the boatswain and the Krumen leaped into her. They called to Sambo and the rest to follow. I thought Sambo would have remained faithful to the captain, and have come to

assist him, but at that moment a forked flame burst up from the hold, so alarming him, that he followed the rest. Paul and I entreated the other men to remain by the smaller boat, while we went into the cabin to bring up my poor friend the captain. As I was descending the companion hatch, I heard the boatswain shouting to the other men, and caught sight of them running to the side. Still I hoped that should they desert us, Paul and I might be able, after placing the captain in the boat, to lower her in safety.

"The ship on fire," exclaimed Captain Willis, when I told him what had occurred, "Heave water down the hold. Do all you can to save our rich freight, that must not be lost on any account."

I told him that we had done what we could, and that the rest of the crew had already deserted the vessel.

The captain sank back on his pillow, "I Have no strength to move," he murmured, "and you and Paul cannot lift me."

"We will try, Massa Captain," said Paul.

I proposed that we should lift him in his cot through the skylight. The captain at length agreed to this. I sprang on deck, intending to secure a tackle to the main boom, by which we might carry out my proposal with greater ease. What was my horror on reaching the deck, to find that the blacks, on quitting the falls, had neglected to secure them, and that the boat having fallen into the water had been washed away and capsized. The flames, too, which were now ascending through the main-hatchway had caught the other boat, and already her bows were burned through.

With this appalling intelligence I returned below. Escape seemed impossible. I proposed building a raft, it was a desperate resource, and there might not be time even to lash a few spars together. I could not bear the thought of allowing the poor captain to perish miserably without an attempt to save him. He divined my thoughts. "Its of no use, Harry, I am prepared for death, and resign myself to the arms of that merciful God whom I have so lately learned to know," he said, with perfect calmness.

Paul, while the captain had been speaking, seized a bright axe which hung against the bulk-head as an ornament, intending to cut away whatever might assist in forming a raft, and had sprang on deck with it. He now came down through the skylight hatch, "It is too late," he exclaimed, "the flames come aft."

He spoke too truly. At that instant dense masses of smoke rushed into the cabin, and the flames burst through the after bulk head. I was scorched, by the heat and almost suffocated. So dense was the smoke which filled the captain's berth, that I could no longer see him.

I felt Paul grasping my hand, "Come Harry, come, too late to save poor captain," he said, dragging me after him. I was almost stifled, and gasped for breath. In another moment I should have fallen, indeed I was so overcome with the smoke that I did not know what was happening.

Happily however I kept firm hold of Paul, and suddenly I found myself plunged headlong into the water. He had hauled me through the cabin window.

"Now strike out Massa Harry, I see boat not far off, we get to her," he exclaimed. I did as he directed me, but the thought of the horrid sharks I had seen swimming about the vessel, almost paralysed my senses, and every moment I expected to find myself seized by the cruel jaws of one of them.

"Cheer up Harry, cheer up," shouted Paul; "there is the boat, we got Friend in heaven who look after us; never fear, we reach her soon, cheer up."

With such like cries he continued to animate me. He shouted thus not only for that object, but to keep any sharks which might be inclined to seize us at a distance. The boat, as we got near her, was, I saw, keel upwards.

"Never fear Massa Harry," said Paul, "we soon right her."

We at length reached the boat, and Paul showing me the way, after some exertion, he going ahead and I keeping astern, we managed to turn her over. We then shook her from side to side till we had hove out a considerable amount of water in her. He told me to get in over the stern, and to begin bailing with my hat. I did as he advised, thankful to find myself out of the grasp of the sharks. He kept splashing about with his heels, and constantly turning round to see that none of the monsters were near. Looking up I caught sight of the long boat standing away from us under sail towards the shore. She had already got too far off to allow of our cries reaching her, or even indeed for those on board to see us. We were thus cruelly deserted by our shipmates. We could only hope for their credit that they supposed we had already lost our lives, and that there would be no use looking for us.

At length I having partially cleared the boat, Paul also got in, and we both began bailing away as hard as we could with our hats. While thus employed I saw a huge shark approaching, and I fancied looking disappointed at our having escaped his hungry maw. Happily the sea by this time had gone considerably down, or our task would have been rendered hopeless. As it was it took us a considerable time to lessen the water in the boat, for deep as she was, the water which leaped in often again nearly refilled her. Still we persevered, for we were, we knew, labouring for our lives. Meantime the shark, as if longing to make us its prey, kept swimming round and round the boat. At a short distance the brigantine was burning furiously, and already the flames, ascending the masts, had caught the rigging and sails.

While as I could not help doing, I turned my gaze at her I saw far away in the horizon the white sail of a vessel. "A sail! a sail!" I shouted; "we are saved Paul, we are saved."

Paul looked up for a minute. "Yes," he said, "she standing this way. The burning ship bring her down to us. She big schooner. May be good, may be bad! though."

Chapter Six.

A calm comes on, and we remain during the night suffering from hunger and thirst.—Paul tells me his history, and I find that he is Cheebo, of whom I am in search.—His joy at hearing of his mother makes him regardless of the suffering we are enduring—The schooner picks us up.—Paul suspects her character.—Before long we discover that she is a slaver, and she runs up a river to receive her cargo on board.

Scarcely had we caught sight of the stranger than the wind entirely fell and she lay totally becalmed. The smooth sea enabled us to free the boat completely, and now we had nothing to do but to sit down and watch the burning brigantine.

First one of the tall masts, completely encircled by the flames, fell hissing into the water. The other, after standing awhile in solitary grandeur, formed a fiery pinnacle to the flaming hull below.

At length it followed its companion, and then the fire ran riot fore and aft. Sometimes wearied by the sight, I put my hands before my eyes to shut it out, but then I could not help thinking of the sad fate of the poor captain, whose body lay on its funeral pile on board.

"Ah, he happy now," whispered Paul. He had also been thinking of him. "He say he love Jesus; he trust to Jesus, no fear for him."

Paul's words brought consolation to my heart. Our own condition might well have made me depressed, yet I felt supported by the strong faith of my companion in a way I formerly should not have thought possible.

We had no food, and not a drop of fresh water to quench our burning thirst.

Some way off we could see pieces of burnt spars floating about. I thought of trying to paddle the boat up to them with our hands, hoping to find some which might serve as oars, and enable us to reach the schooner in the distance. I quickly, however, gave up the attempt, for scarcely had I put my hand into the water than I saw a huge pair of jaws darting towards it, and I had just time to pull it out before they made a snap close to me, which would, in a moment, have bitten it off.

Night soon came down upon us as we thus sat utterly helpless in our boat, while the sea around was lighted up with the flames of the burning vessel. Loaded as she was almost entirely with combustible materials, they burned with unusual fierceness. Her whole interior, as the sides were burned away, appeared one glowing mass, surrounded by a rim of flames which fed upon her stout timbers and planking. Suddenly there came a loud hissing noise across the water, then a dense vapour ascended from her midst, and in an instant after all was darkness. The remains of the "Chieftain" had sunk into the depths of ocean.

"I am afraid our chance of being picked up by the schooner is gone," I observed to Paul. "She very probably, when the breeze comes, will stand away from us."

"There is no such thing as chance, Massa Harry," he answered. "If it is God's will she come, if not, He find some other way to save us. Let us pray that He do what He judge best."

Thereon Paul, without waiting for my reply, knelt down in the bottom of the boat and lifted up his voice in prayer to our

merciful Father in heaven, for that protection which we more than ever felt we so much needed. I imitating his example, heartily joined him.

As we sat in the boat side by side talking together, for neither of us were inclined to sleep, I asked him how it was that he, a common sailor, had become so well instructed a Christian?

"Ah, Massa Harry, I knew about Jesus when I quite a little boy; but only a few years ago I learned to love Him and trust to Him as I now do," he answered. "I'll tell you how dis was. When I piccaniny I hab kind fader and moder, and we live in Yourba country, in our own village, far away. One night the enemy come and attack the village, and carry off many men and women and children. My fader take me up and run away into de wood, my moder follow, but she fall, and the slaver people catch her and take her with the rest. My poor fader, like to break him heart, but for my sake he live and hide away till the slaver people gone. He tried to find my moder, but from dat day to dis he neber hear of her more. After some time it was told him dat a great many people go to a place called Abeokuta, and dat dere day built town, and let no slave-takers come near them, so my fader go there, and we live there, and work and grow rich, and many more people come, and we not fear any of our enemies. All the people were heathens, and prayed to the fetish.

"After some time many people come from Sierra Leone, who had been carried off in slavers, and taken by the English cruisers, and landed there. They find relations and friends in Abeokuta, and so they stop to live with us. Some of them had learned in Sierra Leone about God and His Son Jesus Christ, and they tell us, and many of the people of Abeokuta say they will no longer pray to the fetish, but will only pray to God, and love Him and serve Him. My fader was among these, and now the only thing he cared for in life was to listen to the missionaries and hear about Jesus Christ. Only one thing made him unhappy, that was that my poor moder should not learn the truth of the gospel. He knew that she was carried away by bad people, and he afraid that she become bad like them; but he pray day and night that God in His mercy would make known to her His great love, as He had made it known to him.

"Oh, if I could but hear that she had become a Christian how happy I should be!" he used to say to me over and over again. "Paul," that was the name I had got when I was christened, "you must pray for your moder wid me, and I am sure that God will hear our prayers."

"At last my fader grew sick, and he made me promise, if he died, that I would go to Sierra Leone and try to find if my moder was dere. My fader grew worse and worse, but still him very happy, and taking my hand, he say, 'Paul, you must meet me in heaven, and you must bring your moder there, and then we all live together for ever and ever, where there are no more slave-dealers, and no more war, and no more cruelty,' and den him die.

"After dat I set off to go to Sierra Leone, but slave-dealer catch me on the way and take me on board slaver, with nearly four hundred other black fellows, and we were all put down in ship's hold, and carried away to the coast of Brazil. But English man-of-war catch the slaver. The English captain find out that I was a Christian, and so he ask me if I like to serve on board de man-of-war, and I say yes. The captain, good Christian man himself, so I learn to speak English, and he taught me to read Bible, and I learn still more about Jesus than I did in Abeokuta. At last we got back to Sierra Leone, and then I remember my promise to my father, and while I on shore trying to learn about my moder, the ship sail away, and no more come back. I no hear about my moder, and have no money, so I ship on board merchant vessel, and after sailing in her along the coast for some time I go on board another, and then I again go on board man-of-war. At last I get back to Sierra Leone, and fall very sick, and sent to hospital, then a good missionary come to me and I tell him what my fader had said, and he ask me if I think I going to heaven, and then he tell me more about the right way, and pray with me. And now I find Jesus as my own Saviour and Friend, and love Him, and wish to serve Him, and obey Him. Then the wish came into my heart to preach the gospel to my countrymen, but I, still poor and very ignorant, and I thought if I could make two or three voyages and save money, I would go to England and study there, and be better able to declare the glad tidings of salvation, and that the people would more willingly listen to me.

"It was on the second trip I made that the vessel I was in was wrecked not far from the mouth of the Bonny, and I was making my way with some of those who had escaped with me to Sierra Leone when Captain Willis engaged me to serve on board the 'Chieftain.'"

While Paul was giving me this sketch of his history an idea had forcibly taken possession of my mind. "Tell me," I exclaimed suddenly, "what was your name before you were christened?"

"Cheebo," he answered.

"And your father's name," I inquired eagerly.

"My father, him called Quamino," he said, in a surprised tone.

"Oh Paul!" I cried out, seizing his hand, "I have indeed then good news for you. Your father's and your prayers have been answered, for I can assure you that your mother is a true and faithful Christian. I have known her all my life, her name she has told me was Ambah, and that she was torn away from her husband and child as your mother was from you."

"Yes, yes, Ambah was my mother's name, and did she tell you that her husband's name was Quamino, and their piccaniny was called Cheebo?" he asked, almost gasping for breath.

"Those were the very names she gave me, and I wrote them in my pocket book so that I might not forget them." I answered.

"Oh, Massa Harry, that is indeed joyful news," he cried out. "Then I and my mother and father will all meet in heaven, Praise God! I now not fear what man can do unto me."

It would be difficult to do justice to the feeling displayed by Paul, even were I to repeat all he said, his piety, his gratitude, and his joy. He could talk of nothing else during the night. He seemed to be insensible to hunger and thirst, and to forget altogether the dangerous position in which we were placed. Now he knelt down in prayer, now he gave vent to his feelings in a hymn of praise. I could not help sympathising with him, and rejoicing that I had been the means of giving him the information which made him so happy. Still I must confess that I myself suffered not a little from the pangs of hunger, and would have given much for a glass of cold water.

When morning dawned the schooner was still in sight. I looked anxiously round for the sign of a breeze, hoping that if it did come the stranger would stand towards us. At all events it seemed probable that having seen the burning vessel those on board, in common humanity, would sail over the spot where she had been, on the chance of picking up any of her crew who might have escaped. Paul, however, did not seem to wish this as much as I did. I saw him narrowly watching the vessel, then he shook his head as if he did not like her looks.

The sun rose high in the sky, and beat down on our heads. My thirst became intolerable, and whatever might be the character of the stranger, I could not help longing that she would pick us

up. The breeze came at last, her sails filled. How eagerly I watched her.

"She is standing towards us," I cried out, "we must soon be seen." I stood up on a thwart and waved a handkerchief.

"Better not Massa Harry," said Paul, but I did not heed him.

The schooner came on rapidly. Again I waved my handkerchief, and held it between my two hands, so that it might flutter in the breeze. The stranger approached. She was a fine large square topsail schooner, with a black hull and taunt raking masts. She rounded to close to us, so that she could drop down to where our boat lay.

A rope was hove to us, and I clambered up her side, Paul following me. We were both so weak when we reached her deck that we could scarcely stand. I pointed to my mouth, just able to murmur, "water! water!"

"Si, si, aqua aqua," said a man, who appeared to be an officer; when one of the men dipped a mug into a cask on deck, and brought it to us. I took part of the contents then handed it to Paul; but the seaman signed to me to drain it myself, casting, I thought, a contemptuous glance at my negro companion. However, he brought another cup full, and even though I emptied it to the bottom, still my thirst was scarcely quenched.

An officer now appeared from below, and addressing me in English, asked me how I came to be in the boat. I told him exactly what had occurred.

"It is fortunate for you that we picked you up, for another vessel might not pass this way for days to come," he observed. "But what a pity so rich a cargo should have been lost."

The unhappy fate of the poor captain did not seem to concern him much.

I could not make out the character of the vessel.

She was Spanish, I guessed, and her officers and crew appeared smart active fellows; and though she looked in some respects like a man-of-war, she certainly was not one. Her hatches were off, and as far as I could judge there was nothing to show that she was a slaver.

The officer who had spoken to me finding that I was a young gentleman, politely invited me down into the cabin, telling Paul that he might go forward among the men. Paul thanked him, and took advantage of the permission granted him. The officers were going to breakfast, and I was very thankful when they invited me to join them. Altogether they treated me very civilly.

I found an opportunity of speaking to Paul during the day.

"Bad vessel this," he whispered. "Dey put you on shore soon Massa Harry, and so no harm come to you, but I fear they make me slave, and I no get back to see my moder. Still I pray God that He find a way for escape."

I had too much reason soon afterwards to know that Paul was right in his conjectures.

The next day we came in sight of a large vessel. Signals were exchanged, and we hove-to near each other. The boats were then actively engaged in bringing numerous articles on board the schooner—arms and ammunition, and cutlery, and Manchester goods, and farinha (the meal on which slaves on board ship are fed), and cases which I found contained slave shackles. There was no secret indeed made about the matter.

The schooner having taken her cargo on board, the other vessel sailed away while we stood towards the coast. The carpenters were busily employed in fitting an additional deck in the hold, and Paul told me that it was called the slave deck, and that the slaves we were to take on board would be seated along it, packed close together side by side, and that they would thus be kept during the whole run to the Brazils, or wherever the schooner was bound with her hapless freight.

"You see what this vessel is," said the officer who had spoken to me in English. "We have saved your life, and must exact a promise from you not to appear as a witness against any one on board should you at any future period be called on to do so. Let me advise you indeed not to take notice of anything that occurs on board and it will be the better for you. We do not wish to harm you, but there are those among us who hold human life very cheap, and they are not likely to stand on ceremony should you interfere with their proceedings."

I replied that I was very grateful to him and the other officers for treating me kindly, and that I only desired to be put on board an English trader, in which I could work a passage home,

"and I hope," I added, "that my black companion will be allowed to accompany me."

"As to that I can make no promise," he answered. "The captain will decide the matter; but, I have no doubt, that if we fall in with an English trader you will be allowed to go on board her."

A bright look-out was kept from the mast-head, and twice the schooner altered her course to avoid a sail seen in the distance. At length we came off the mouth of a river. A signal was made from the shore. With a fair breeze we ran in, and proceeding up some distance, dropped anchor in a creek, where the schooner lay concealed by the tall trees which grew on its banks.

Chapter Seven.

I witness the embarkation of slaves collected at the barracoons, and the cruel way in which they are treated and packed in the hold of the slaver.—Unwilling to desert Paul, I remain on board, and the slaver puts to sea.—Paul is threatened for attempting to comfort the slaves with the gospel news.—The schooner receives more slaves on board along the coast.—Some are drowned coming off—The slaver gets on shore just as a man-of-war is seen in the offing.—A fog comes on, and the schooner's crew making desperate efforts to get her off, she escapes, to my bitter disappointment, from the man-of-war's boats, along the coast.

I found myself once more exposed to the pestilential air of an African river. I in vain tried to sleep. All night long I heard the sound of the carpenters at work fitting the slave decks, and fixing the bars across them, to which the captive negroes were to be secured. The crew were employed most of their time in hoisting water casks, and a further supply of farinha, on board.

At length when morning broke I went on deck to breathe the air, which I hoped would be somewhat cooler than that of the calm. Through an opening in the trees I saw several long low sheds with cottages and huts scattered round them, while a number of people were moving about. The door in the end of one of the sheds was thrown open, and there issued forth a

long line of black figures, walking two and two, and secured together by iron shackles round their wrists.

They staggered along with unwilling steps, looking round on the trees and distant blue hills, which they were destined never again to see, and even now it seemed to me that could they have wrenched their hands from those iron bonds they would have attempted to strike a blow for freedom, and make their escape into the forest. On either side of them, however, walked ruffianly looking fellows, with pistols in their belts and heavy whips in their hands, with which, if their captives attempted to lag behind, they urged them on. One or two were whites, but most of them were negroes, and seemed to have no scruple in leading their countrymen into captivity.

So long a line came forth that it seemed impossible the building could have held so many human beings. Some were strong men, who cast scowling glances at their guards; others were youths, many mere lads and young boys, and there were a considerable number of women, mostly young, many, indeed, being mere girls. Several of the elder women had infants in their arms, and children of various ages trotted by the sides of others, or clung to their hands. The sad procession came towards the vessel. A bridge had been formed from her deck to the shore. The leading slaves hesitated as they reached it, and refused to move forward till urged on by the lash of their guards.

Their condition had been bad before, but they knew now that they were to be shut down and crowded together in the dark noisome hold of the slave ship. As they arrived on board they were compelled to go below and take their seats on the bare deck, side by side, with their legs secured to the iron bars, and so closely packed that their knees were drawn up almost to their chins. Still, although nearly a hundred had come on board, a considerable portion of the deck remained unoccupied.

I took an opportunity of going on shore, no one interfering with me. As I went through the village I passed a house of some size, in front of which the captain was seated in the verandah with another white man, with whom he appeared to be eagerly bargaining. The latter was, I found, the principle slave-dealer, to whom the sheds or barracoons, in which the slaves were confined, belonged. Going on I looked into one of the barracoons. The heat and odour which proceeded from it made me unwilling to enter. It was full of blacks, seated on narrow benches, with their arms and legs secured to long bars which ran in front of them. Here they had been placed as they were

brought down from the interior, and kept in readiness for the arrival of the slaver. This, I suspect, was the gang for whom the captain had been bargaining with their owner, as they were immediately afterwards summoned out and marched down, as the others had been, to the vessel.

While I was still on shore I saw coming through the woods another long line of captives. They had come, apparently, a long distance, for they were mostly foot-sore, and several could scarcely move along; not a few were wounded, and many of the men, and even of the women, bore traces on their backs of the cruel lash which had been inflicted to make them hasten their steps when they had showed any unwillingness to proceed. They were allowed but a short time to rest in the barracoons, and having been fed with farinha, mixed into porridge, were marched down to the ship. They gazed at her with looks of dismay, for they knew that she was to convey them away over the wide ocean they had heard of, but never seen, to an unknown land, where they were to toil, unrequited, for hard task-masters.

I thought of remaining on shore rather than proceed in the slave vessel; but was unwilling to desert Paul, and he had not been allowed to land. I therefore returned, hoping to obtain his release.

"You must remain with us a little longer," said my friend the officer, who spoke English, "and we will land you on another part of the coast, where you are more likely than here to meet with a trader."

I was compelled to comply, indeed I knew by his tone and manner, that I should not be allowed to remain behind.

All the slaves which had been collected in the dépôt having been received on board, the schooner cast off from the bank, and proceeded down the river. As we crossed the bar the vessel pitched heavily, and shipped several seas. The poor wretches below, as the water rushed down upon them, fancying that they were about to be drowned, gave vent to piercing shrieks and cries. The Spanish crew heard them with perfect indifference, and no one, with the exception of Paul, took the slightest trouble to calm their fears—he managing to slip down into the hold assured them that there was no danger; but he could offer them very little comfort besides as to their prospects in this world. Still he could speak to them of another and a better land, "where the weary are at rest, and the wicked cease from troubling," and where the shackles of slavery are cast aside,

and to which the God of mercy invites all His creatures to come and dwell with Him, and be at rest. He was endeavouring to explain to the miserable beings the simple truths of the gospel, when he was overheard by one of the officers, and ordered on deck, with a threat that should he again be found speaking to the slaves he would be shackled along with them.

We ran down the coast and came to an anchorage in-shore. There were numerous huts and several large canoes drawn up on the beach, on which a heavy surf was breaking. In a short time people appeared collecting from all quarters and a canoe came off with a burly negro on board, who, as he climbed up the side was treated with great ceremony. He was, I found, the king of that part of the country, his chief revenue being derived from slave dealing. His business with the captain was quickly concluded. A signal was made from the vessel, and soon afterwards I saw a long line of slaves coming forth from behind a wood which concealed the barracoons where they had been confined. They were marched down to the canoes, and thrust in one after the other in spite of their struggles.

The canoes were now launched, and began to make their way through the surf. Three succeeded in getting alongside, but the fourth was overturned by a heavy roller, and the unfortunate passengers thrown out amid the foaming waters. Some, as if thus glad to escape from their persecutors, sank without making a struggle for life; others clung to the canoe, and a few were either washed back on the beach or picked up by the surrounding canoes, to which the crew had already made their way. Eight or ten human beings thus lost their lives, but the event seemed to cause no concern to the captain or his officers. He had only agreed to pay for those brought off to him in safety. The embarkation continued as before, and we were soon surrounded by canoes full of slaves, who were forthwith hoisted on board and stowed below. Their price, chiefly in goods, was then lowered into the canoes, which returned to the shore with much more caution than they had come out.

Two days afterwards we obtained an other addition to our cargo still further down the coast. On this occasion we brought up in a sheltered bay. Here the slaves were conveyed on large rafts. Every expedition was used in getting them on board, for news had been received that an English cruiser was in the neighbourhood. The moment they were stowed away the anchor was hove-up and sail was made.

As we were going out, and appeared to be clear of the harbour, I heard a grating sound, and felt the vessel's keel touch the

ground. At the same moment the look-out from the mast-head gave notice that a sail was in sight in the offing.

Every effort was made to get the schooner off, but she stuck fast. One of the officers had gone aloft with a spy-glass. On his return I observed a look of consternation in the countenance of the captain and his mates. After talking eagerly together one of them went aloft. He remained for sometime with his spy-glass turned towards the stranger, which, in a short time, could be seen clearly from the deck, and from the expressions I heard them utter, I found that she was supposed to be a British man-of-war. I endeavoured to conceal my satisfaction, for I hoped that the unfortunate slaves would be rescued, and that Paul and I might be taken on board her.

It shortly, however, fell perfectly calm, and the spirits of the slaver's crew revived. The tide was rising, anchors were carried out, and desperate efforts were made to heave the vessel off. A report now came from aloft that several boats were approaching from the direction of the cruiser. The Spaniards, on hearing this, began to stamp about the deck, grinding their teeth and shaking their fists towards where the boats were supposed to be, working themselves into a perfect fury. Arms were got up on deck, and the two guns the vessel carried were loaded and run out. The savage cries and oaths, and fierce gestures of the crew, made them look more like demons than men.

I looked anxiously for Paul, fearing that in their fury they might injure him, but he had wisely taken shelter in the berth forward so as to be out of their sight. I had thought of hiding in the cabin where I slept, but felt too anxious to watch the issue of events to do so. Of one thing I felt very sure, that though the Spaniards might fight, the British seamen would soon be in possession of the slaver.

The day was drawing to a close, however, and I began to fear that the boats might not reach the schooner before darkness set in. In a short time too, I observed a thick mist gathering over the land, which rose higher and higher, and came moving towards us. We were soon completely enveloped in it. This seemed to give the slaver's crew great satisfaction, and they again began to talk and laugh in their usual tone, while all the time they continued their exertions to get the vessel off. Lazy as the Spaniards are they can work as hard as any one when they have a sufficient motive to arouse them.

I observed the captain frequently wetting his finger and holding it up, and soon I felt a light breeze blowing from the land. The

sails were let fall, and the crew making another desperate effort, the schooner glided away up to her anchors. No time was lost in weighing them. I thought the crew would have shouted to show their satisfaction, but not a sound was uttered. Onward she glided, keeping close in-shore.

My heart sank within me, and my hopes of escaping from the vile slave ship vanished. The lead was kept going. I felt sure that no stranger would venture to stand in so close to the coast as we were doing. On we stood till the Spanish seamen seemed satisfied that they had made good their escape from the boats of the cruiser. As the schooner had by this time nearly a full cargo of slaves, I feared that she would not again touch on the coast, and that I was destined to make a voyage on board the hateful craft across the Atlantic.

Chapter Eight.

The Spaniards believing the man-of-war to be far away, steer to the westward.—We sight her, and she chases us.—Cruel device of the slaver's crew to assist their escape.—Paul, among others, being thrown overboard that the man-of-war might have to pick them up; I fear that he has been lost.—My life preserved by one of the officers, when threatened by the slaver's crew.—The schooner escapes, but dismasted in a gale, and again overtaken.—Paul and my cousin Jack come on board, and I join the corvette as a midshipman.—Returning to England I restore Cheebo to his mother.—My adventures show that "all works together for good to them who love God."—Jack becomes a commander, marries my sister Mary, and I find ample means for supporting the rest of my dear sisters.

The schooner ran on during the night, keeping the coast close aboard to enjoy the advantage of the land breeze. I managed to get a word with Paul to ask him whether he thought there was a probability of her making her escape. "I pray God for the poor slaves," he answered, "and hope English cruiser still catch her."

As may be supposed a very bright look-out was kept for the cruiser. As the day advanced she was no where to be seen, and the captain, anxious to make as quick a run as possible across

the Atlantic, the vessel's head was turned to the westward, the wind still blowing off shore. Still, however, a haze hung over the ocean, sufficiently thick to prevent objects being seen in the far distance. This seemed still further to favour the escape of the slaver.

We had got some distance off the land when the haze lifted, and away to the southward a sail was seen, which the Spaniards at once seemed to know was the British man-of-war. She saw us at the same moment, and crowded all sail in chase. The schooner was put before the wind, which now came from the southward, and every stitch of canvas she could carry was set, men also going aloft with buckets of water to wet the sails.

Again the same scene of impotent rage I had before witnessed was enacted, and the fury of the Spaniards increased as they saw the man-of-war gaining on us, she apparently having more wind than we had.

I, as I had previously done, kept as much as I could out of their way, and tried to prevent any gleam of satisfaction appearing in my countenance.

The man-of-war was a corvette—evidently a powerful and very fast craft, against which the slaver would not have had the shadow of a chance, had even her crew possessed the courage to fight, which I felt very sure, in spite of their bravado, they would not.

The corvette had been bringing the breeze up with her, and now the schooner felt it herself, and began to move more rapidly through the water. She, too, was a fast vessel, and her crew might justly have entertained hopes of escaping. I little thought of the cruel device they were contemplating to aid them in so doing.

At length the man-of-war had got almost near enough to reach the slaver with her bow-chasers. She tried the range of one of them, but the shot fell short. On this the captain turned, with a savage determination in his eye, and spoke to one of the officers. Directly afterwards I saw him descend to the slave deck with two or three of the men, and they quickly returned with one of the unfortunate captives. Instantly the unhappy slave was secured to a plank, and, in spite of his cries and entreaties, hove overboard. As the poor wretch floated astern I could not help recollecting that the sea swarmed with sharks, and that he would probably be seized before many minutes were over by one of the ravenous monsters. I guessed the

object of the Spaniards; it was confiding in the humanity of my countrymen that they would heave-to in order to pick up the poor black, should he escape the sharks, and thus allow the schooner to gain ground.

The device answered the expectations of its cruel perpetrators. The corvette hove-to, a boat was lowered, and the slave taken up. The Spaniards seemed delighted with the result of their experiment, and prepared to try it again. Another slave was brought up on deck, and, like the former, hove overboard. Scarcely had he reached the water when a fearful shriek was heard, and the poor wretch and the plank together disappeared below the surface. This, however, did not prevent the Spaniards from again attempting the plan to impede the progress of their pursuer, and three more slaves were brought up.

Just then I heard several of the crew shouting out "El heretico!" and what was my horror to see them dragging Paul aft. He spoke to them in such Spanish as he could command, but uttered no cry, and when he understood their object, walked calmly among them to the gangway.

I could not restrain myself, but ran up to him and implored my English-speaking friend to plead on his behalf.

"Take care my lad, or you may be treated in the same way," was the answer.

"Oh, but he has just heard of his mother, who longs to see him, and I have promised to take him to her," I cried out. "Oh, ask them if any of them have mothers from whom they have been long parted, would they not desire to see them again? Will they not have compassion on my poor friend?"

"Don't grieve for me, Massa Harry," said Paul, while the sailors were lashing him to the plank. "God take care of me. Give my lub to my moder, and tell her I meet her in heaven, and she know me den."

In vain I pleaded. My friend seizing me by the arm, dragged me away, while the savages hove Paul overboard.

"Go into my cabin," he exclaimed, "its your only chance of safety."

I saw, as he dragged me aft, that the Spaniards were preparing to throw several other slaves into the sea; and, as I turned my

head, three in rapid succession were thrust through the gangway, secured, as the others had been, to floats.

My friend had not cautioned me without reason, for I heard the crew clamouring for the "Englez." My friend went out to them, and on his return told me that they wished to throw me into the sea, but that he had advised them not to do so lest after all the schooner should be captured, when the captain of the man-of-war would certainly deal more hardly with them for having thus treated a countryman.

I thanked him for interfering as far as I was concerned, but, at the same time, could not help observing that the English captain would consider the crime of throwing any one overboard equally great, whatever the colour of the sufferer.

"Ah, we think little about the life of a black," he answered carelessly.

"So it seems," I said, for I felt utterly horrified at what I had witnessed. A feeling of desperate indifference to my own fate had crept over me. "Poor Paul! that the wretches should have treated you thus," I said to myself. Then I remembered how Paul would have acted, and I prayed that he might be protected, though I confess I had little expectation of his escaping the ravenous jaws of a shark.

So eager was I to ascertain what had happened, that had not my friend locked the door on me, in spite of his warnings, I should have gone out again to watch the progress of the chase. Some time elapsed; I longed again to hear the sound of the corvette's guns, but in vain. The wind had increased, as I could judge by the movement of the vessel; and I at length began to fear that she would after all escape.

Some hours passed away, my friend at length came back. "You are hungry, I dare say," he said, "and you may come into the cabin and have some supper, but it is not safe for you to go on deck, the crew are angry at your having interfered about the black seaman; although our plan has answered, for your good natured-countrymen, by stopping to pick up the negroes, have enabled us to escape them. A few of the wretches were, to be sure, picked off by the sharks."

"Did my friend, the black sailor, escape?" I asked eagerly.

"As to that I cannot say," he answered, "undoubtedly some escaped, or the corvette would not have hove-to so often. But come, the supper is on the table."

I declared that I had no appetite; but he insisted upon my going into the cabin, and said that he should be offended if I did not. "It would be better for you also to put an indifferent face on the matter," he added.

Those of the officers who came to supper were laughing and talking in good spirits, and, as far as I could judge, seemed to be amusing themselves at my expense. I, however, had the wisdom to follow my friend's advice, and showed no signs of annoyance. I confess, too, that the sight of the food quickly restored my appetite.

When supper was over my friend advised me to go back to my cabin. "We shall be far away from the corvette by to-morrow morning, and then you can come on deck if you like," he observed.

As I lay in my berth the dreadful scenes I had witnessed came constantly before my sight, and I kept alternately hoping that Paul might have been saved, and fearing that he was lost. For a long time too it seemed I could not go to sleep. The vessel also was pitching heavily, the sea dashed against her sides, and I could hear the roaring and whistling of the wind in her rigging; it was evidently blowing very hard. At last I dropped off to sleep. I was awakened by a loud crash, and the fearful shrieks and cries which arose from the hold.

No longer heeding my friend's caution, slipping on my clothes, I rushed on deck. The schooner's masts had gone by the board, and she lay helpless on the foaming ocean. The crew were shouting and swearing as they endeavoured to cut away the masts, which were battering against her sides, while ever and anon a heavy sea striking her, swept over her deck, and from the shrieks which came up out of the waters a short distance away to leeward, I had little doubt that several of the people had been washed overboard. Fearing that such might be my fate were I to remain on deck, I hurried back again into the cabin. I knew that nothing could be done till daylight, and that it would be impossible to rig jury-masts until the sea was somewhat smoother. Perhaps before then the slaver and her living freight might be carried down into the depths of ocean. I would not venture to lie down, but sat in the cabin, ready to rush out and make an attempt for my life should such a catastrophe appear imminent.

The night seemed very long. At length I saw daylight through the bull's-eye overhead, and the movement of the vessel was less violent than before. I could no longer restrain my curiosity, and made my way on deck. The crew, much diminished, were sheltering themselves under the bulwarks, while the officers were collected in the after part of the vessel. I saw that their eyes were directed to windward, I looked in the same direction, and there to my infinite satisfaction I caught sight of the corvette standing towards us. I was glad to see my English friend among the officers, but the captain and first mate were gone. They had been carried overboard. I felt that they deserved their fate, terrible as it was.

The corvette soon came up, and hove-to to windward; a boat was lowered and pulled towards us. I watched her eagerly. A lieutenant was steering, and among her crew I observed a black man. I tried to make out his features, but at that distance it was impossible. The hope rose in my breast that he might be Paul.

As the schooner still rolled heavily it was no easy matter for the boat to get alongside without the risk of being swamped. She at length came up under our quarter. I looked anxiously over the bulwarks, and to my joy saw that the black was indeed Paul. He caught sight of me.

"All right Massa Harry," he shouted, "we soon aboard, praise God that you safe."

"Silence!" said the officer, for Paul had forgotten the discipline of a man-of-war in speaking. At that moment I thought I recognised the lieutenant's countenance; yes, I was nearly certain it was my cousin Jack Haultaught, whose yarns, when he was a midshipman, first made me wish to go to sea. He and his crew soon sprang on to the low deck of the schooner, while the boat, with a couple of hands in her, was veered astern.

I first greeted Paul warmly. His joy at seeing me was excessive, for he had been afraid that the slavers would have thrown me overboard as they had him, and as I had not been picked up thought my life had been sacrificed. As my cousin Jack did not know me I had time to talk to Paul.

"Oh Massa Harry we must praise God for all His mercy and goodness to us, what we think going to be very bad for us He make turn out for the best. The captain of the corvette, my old friend, he good Christian man, he say he take me to England with him, and then I see my dear moder, and learn more of the

Bible, and then come back and preach the gospel to my poor countrymen."

The hatches, which had hitherto been kept battened down, were now taken off. The five hundred human beings crowded below were evidence of the character of the vessel, and enabled the lieutenant at once to claim her as a prize to Her Majesty's ship "Triton."

I do not wish to dwell on the fearful sight which met our eyes as we looked down below on the mass of humanity jammed, pressed, and huddled together. And oh, the horrible odour which arose from that foul hold! It seemed impossible that human beings could have existed a minute in it, much less the many hours during which those unhappy people had been shut up during the gale. How fearful would have been their sufferings had they been compelled thus to make the passage across the Atlantic. How enormous a proportion of them would have died. As it was, many of them had their limbs broken, and many were sadly crushed and bruised.

At length I went up to the lieutenant and put out my hand. "You don't know me, cousin Jack," I said.

"What, Harry!" he exclaimed, looking at me hard. "I am delighted to see you my boy. The negro sailor told me that there was a young Englishman on board, but I did not expect to find you. You will be welcome on board the 'Triton,' and if you have a fancy for continuing at sea, I think the captain will be able to enter you as a supernumerary, and get you regularly appointed when we return to England."

I told him that above all things it was what I should like.

I now accompanied him to the "Triton," carrying with us the surviving officers of the slaver. They were treated with scant ceremony, but without any undue harshness, on board, and berthed together in a cabin run up on the lower deck. I was, however, able to speak a good word for the officer who had treated me kindly, and been the means of saving my life, and I was pleased to hear the captain thank him, and afterwards the officers, to show their sense of his conduct, invited him to mess with them. He declined doing so, however. He afterwards told my cousin Jack that in consequence of the scenes he had witnessed he had resolved to have nothing more to do with the slave trade.

"It was a great temptation," he said. "I expected to make my fortune in a short time, and that induced me to engage in the accursed traffic."

The corvette now took the schooner in tow. As soon as the sea was calm enough hands were sent on board her to rig jury-masts, and a course was steered for Sierra Leone. The slaver, as may be supposed, was condemned, the slaves liberated, and the whole of them settled in the colony. Paul entered on board the "Triton," and I was placed as a midshipman on her quarter-deck.

We cruised for a short time longer on the coast, and captured another slaver, and then, as the corvette had been her due time on the station, she was ordered home.

Jack, from having been at sea, had not heard of the misfortunes of my family.

As soon as the ship was paid off he insisted on accompanying me and Paul back to Liverpool. We reached the house where I had left my sisters under Mammy's care. Flowers bloomed before the windows, and there was an air of neatness and comfort about the little abode which looked very pleasing.

I begged Jack and Paul to remain outside while I went in to prepare the inmates for their arrival. Mammy opened the door. She seized me in her arms the moment she saw me, and I did not at all mind the kisses she bestowed on my cheeks, though her lips were thick and her black face shrivelled.

"Your sisters up stairs, Massa Harry. They so glad you come back," she exclaimed, and dragged me along. She opened the door where they were seated at work.

"I have brought some strangers to see you," I said, after our greetings were over. "You remember our cousin Jack Haultaught; he insisted on coming, he is a first-rate capital fellow, and a true friend of mine."

"We shall be very glad to see him and to thank him," said Mary and Jane together.

"And I shall be delighted," cried Emily. "I recalled his giving me all sorts of curious things when he came back from his first voyage. I'll run down and ask him in."

"Mammy," I said, feeling very doubtful how I could best prepare her for meeting her son. "You remember the commission you gave me, I did my best to execute it. I asked all the people I met if they knew Cheebo."

"Ah, you no hear of him," said Mammy, with a sigh.

"I did not say that," I answered. "Mammy, you believe that God hears your prayers."

"Yes, Massa Harry, I am sure He does," she said, and then it seemed to flash across her that I had something of interest to communicate about her son.

"You hear of Cheebo, he become Christian, oh say dat, Massa Harry, say dat."

"Yes, Mammy," I answered, taking her hand, "I not only heard of him, but I have seen him; and, Mammy, do you think the joy would not be too much for you if I were to tell you that I hope you will see him too?"

"Oh, he is come! he is come!" exclaimed Mammy.

I made a sign to my sisters to remain with our old nurse, whispering to Mary that I was going to bring up her long lost son. I hurried down stairs, and found that Emily had already invited Jack and his companion into the house. I led Paul to the door, and my sisters slipping out; we left the old woman and her son together.

And now it is time that I should bring my yarn to a conclusion. Jack seemed to find Liverpool a very delightful place; and perhaps it may account for his so doing, when I say that before he went away he asked my sister Mary to marry him. She did not refuse. Soon afterwards he got his promotion, which he well deserved for his activity and zeal during his long service on the African coast.

Through the interest of the captain of the "Triton" I got appointed to a man-of-war brig on that station, where, being pretty well up to the tricks of the slavers, I was instrumental in capturing a number of vessels, and assisting to put down the abominable slave trade. As a good deal of prize money came into my pocket, I had the gratification of sending home considerable sums to my sisters. Mammy's joy, when she found that not only had her son become a Christian, but that her husband had accepted the truth, was full. She willingly parted

with Paul when she heard of his wish to become a missionary of the gospel. He returned to Sierra Leone, and after remaining a short time there, went on to Abeokuta, to labour with others in spreading the glad tidings of salvation among the dark-skinned sons of Africa.
